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Interview: Shohreh Bayat,
the Iranian chess player and arbiter
who fled to Britain after being attacked
in her home country over a photo

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IT'S SORT OF A PUBLIC SECRET –
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**HOW HAS THE CORONAVIRUS
OUTBREAK AFFECTED CHESS?**

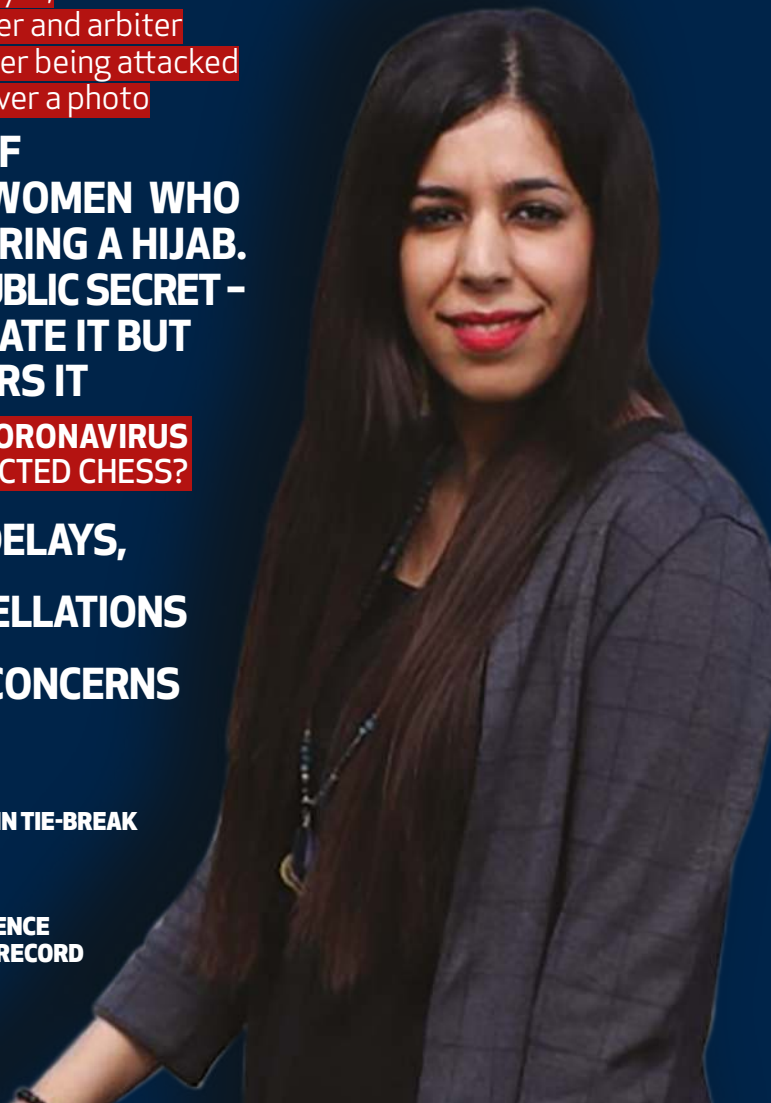


**DELAYS,
CANCELLATIONS
AND CONCERNS**



**A CHANCER AND A WINNER:
JU WENJUN DEFENDS TITLE IN TIE-BREAK**

**WIJK AAN ZEE 2020:
CARUANA'S DOMINANCE,
THE YOUNGSTERS' PROMINENCE
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BCM INTERVIEW: SHOHREH BAYAT,
the Iranian chess player and arbiter who
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I AM JUST ONE OF MANY IRANIAN WOMEN WHO DON'T LIKE WEARING A HIJAB

**IT'S SORT OF A PUBLIC SECRET
MOST WOMEN HATE IT
BUT EVERYONE WEARS IT**



By Milan Dinic
Photo: FIDE Women's World Chess
Championship match Official / Shohreh Bayat

Shohreh Bayat was the Chief Arbiter at the Women's World Championship match which took place in Shanghai and Vladivostok in January. A photo from the event, showing Bayat wearing the headscarf in a way which revealed her hair, led to her being heavily criticised and condemned in Iran. Fearing her safety, the 32-year-old Iranian decided not to return to Iran, seeking refuge in Britain instead. The story was picked up in the global news media and was widely publicised as yet another example of the difficulties Iranians are having with their government and vice-versa.

Shohreh Bayat is now in the UK where she is hoping for a new beginning, after an incident which in a space of a few days changed her life forever. British Chess Magazine spoke to Shohreh Bayat for over an hour. This is her story, in full.

British Chess Magazine: How did this whole thing happen?

Shohreh Bayat: I was in China, as the Chief Arbiter of the Women's World Championship Match. The event began with the first round and everything seemed fine. However, after Round One I received a message from the president of the Iranian Chess Federation who told me to 'send a better photo'. I knew what he meant by this. They meant that my hijab was not good and that they want me to send 'a more proper photo'. This was annoying for me and I sent them the same photo adding that 'this is the best I can do'. They didn't publish it.

I just didn't want to have a photo with more of the hijab covering my hair, because I was already annoyed by the fact that I had to wear a hijab. This is something that you don't want to wear but you are tolerating it or are forced. My hijab in the first picture was totally acceptable by Iranian standards. They just wanted to push me for something extra and I didn't want to give it.

BCM: What happened when you sent them the same photo?

S.B: They didn't publish it so I assumed they were waiting for the next stream of photos, from the second round of the match. [The photos were published daily, on the Flickr page belonging to the official website - note, BCM]. I assumed they wanted a 'more hijabi' photo of me. Bearing in mind the whole thing, I then decided to show more of my hair in the second round. Of course, I had the scarf on my head as well, but I showed more hair because I wanted to force them

I regret the whole situation, but I don't regret not wearing the headscarf afterwards. I am rethinking the situations over and over. However, for the whole of my life, I was annoyed about having to wear the headscarf. It was like lying to yourself and other people

to use the photo from the first round, which they originally refused to publish. This was my good guess as the Iranian Chess Federation then used the photo from the first round - which they first refused to publish - and put that one on their social media account. Then everything seemed to be fine - I wore another scarf in Round Three and it seemed that the situation had blown over.

BCM: The whole story emerged after Round Three. What happened?

S.B: After Round Three, however, upon returning to the hotel I turned on my mobile phone. I saw loads of messages and missed calls from friends and family. My friends sent me messages saying not to come back to Iran, that I will be arrested and will not be allowed to leave the country.

BCM: How did they find out – was the story about your hijab big in the Iranian media?

S.B: Yes, it was in all Iranian media. In the screenshots which they shared with me, the reports read that I did not wear the headscarf deliberately in order to protest against the hijab. It was seen as an act of political protest and that it was done deliberately. It was all very negative. All these news outlets are related to the government. One of the government-related news agencies published an interview with the president of the Iranian Chess Federation who was trying to calm the situation but also to protect himself, by saying that it was FIDE who invited me to the event and that I wasn't sent by the Iranian Chess Federation.

BCM: Let's make it clear – were you trying to protest or send a message when you decided to wear the hijab in a way which revealed some of your hair and was problematic for the Iranian Chess Federation?

S.B: No. The only message I was trying to send was to the Iranian Chess Federation to tell them to leave me alone and that I'm doing the best I can regarding the hijab. The president of the Iranian Chess Federation knows me.

BCM: *How do you feel about wearing the hijab?*

S.B: Regarding the hijab, I don't like it and I don't feel comfortable about it. I tried to wear a hijab in a modern way. This was done also bearing in mind that FIDE is now more focused on promoting women's rights and I didn't want to cause bad PR for the global chess federation and for the overall image of chess.

BCM: *What happened after you read the messages from friends?*

S.B: I then checked the Iranian Chess Federation social media channel on Telegram [a social messaging service which is popular in Iran, as an alternative to Twitter - note, BCM] and I saw that they had removed the previous post containing a photo where my hair is shown, from the first round. Then the president of the Iranian Chess Federation sent me a message saying that the media published my picture without the hijab and he asked me to write a statement in which I would clarify things and help ease the situation. I didn't want to do that as I don't believe in the things he asked me to write. I was very disturbed by the news from Iran and now there was the chess federation asking me to write something while at the same time they are removing a post with my picture from their social media account.

BCM: *Did the Federation offer you any support?*

S.B: I asked the Iranian Chess Federation if they could provide me with a support letter which would guarantee that I won't be

I asked the Iranian Chess Federation if they could provide me with a support letter which would guarantee that I won't be arrested in Iran. At first, they said 'yes', but then they provided nothing and eventually said they couldn't

I just didn't want to have a photo with more of the hijab covering my hair, because I was already annoyed by the fact that I had to wear a hijab. This is something that you don't want to wear but you are tolerating it or are forced. My hijab in the first picture was totally acceptable by Iranian standards

IF IRANIANS COULD CHOOSE, THEY WOULD CHOOSE DEMOCRACY

BCM: *What is life like in Iran in general?*

S.B: Iranians love their country but they are so tired of politics. They don't have the right to change anything - it doesn't matter if you have elections or not, you just choose from a list of people who are not offering real change. The Iranians are liberal people...

BCM: *When you say they are liberal, could you explain what you mean by that?*

S.B: For example, weddings are very similar to European weddings: everyone is mixed and sits together and no one wears a scarf. Drinking alcohol is illegal in Iran but you can always find alcohol. If we had a referendum in Iran on wearing the hijab, the majority would be against wearing it. If we had a free referendum for a political system, Iranians would vote for democracy.

BCM: *For how long do you think this current system in Iran will last?*

S.B: I don't know. People are not ready to die. Every time they protest, the reprisal of the government is brutal. Even when people protested over the price of petrol, they were shot at and the Internet was shut down. It's not easy to fight in such circumstances.



From a family trip in Georgia

arrested in Iran. At first, they said ‘yes’, but then they provided nothing and eventually said they couldn’t. By this time I was fed up with everything and didn’t know what to do. Bearing this in mind, I decided that the best thing I could do is be myself. In Round Four, I decided to appear without a hijab and not to change that until the end of the match.

BCM: *In hindsight, do you regret the decisions you’ve made?*

S.B: I regret the whole situation, but I don’t regret not wearing the headscarf afterwards. I am rethinking the situations over and over. However, for the whole of my life, I was annoyed about having to wear the headscarf. It was like lying to yourself and other people.

BCM: *What was the reaction of FIDE when news about this emerged?*

S.B: This happened during one of the most important global chess events of the year. The President of FIDE [Arkady Dvorkovich - note, BCM] met with me and he was very nice and supportive. Nigel Short, FIDE VP, was also there and they both said that I did not break any FIDE rules. They were very understanding and asked if I wanted to leave the tournament, but I decided to stay and continue - it was my duty.

BCM: *Looking at the reaction in Iran – were you surprised or not?*

S.B: The social media in Iran is mostly connected to the government. There is no right to speak openly so you just follow the government line. But I did receive a lot of support from the people in Iran - so many messages, it was huge!

BCM: *Has there been any public support for you in Iran or has it all been private?*

S.B: You have alternative channels - like BBC Persian or some other Persian channels in the Middle East, based outside of Iran - and people there voiced support for me. In Iran it’s illegal but all people have satellite-dishes in their homes and watch foreign channels. There was also a lot of support on social media, but also in the comments section of the websites of news outlets connected to the government, which is interesting.

I FOUND OUT A WEEK AFTER THE REST OF THE WORLD THAT I WILL BE THE CHIEF ARBITER IN THE WOMEN’S MATCH

- For me, it was a great honour to be the Chief Arbiter at the Women’s championship match. I did not expect to get that invitation and only found out about it after everyone else had! At that time there was an internet blackout in Iran [this happened in November 2019, following protests across the country due to fuel prices - note, BCM] and after one week I noticed that FIDE appointed me! I knew I was among the candidates, but I couldn’t believe it. Actually, when I connected to the Internet I first received a message from one of my friends saying ‘Congratulations’. I first thought it was because we got the Internet back on, but actually, it was because of being selected as the Chief Arbiter for the Women’s match. I was extremely happy and excited! Two days afterwards an official letter from FIDE arrived confirming my position.



The photos which caused the uproar to the Iranian media

BCM: *How did your family and friends react when you decided not to wear a hijab later on in the tournament?*

S.B: They respected my decision.

BCM: *How did you come to the decision to come to Britain?*

S.B: It was by coincidence. I was supposed to attend the Gibraltar chess festival this year so I already applied for and was granted a British visa. I could have gone to some other country where I don't need a visa - such as Nepal or Georgia - but I thought that Britain is the safest place I can go to.

BCM: *Since you came to the UK, have you had any contact with the British authorities regarding your situation?*

S.B: Yes, I have. I have a lawyer who is taking care of these matters. I have also received a lot of support from the chess community as well as the English Chess Federation. I was also offered a chance to play in the London Chess League and 4NCL.

BCM: *What about your family? How are they?*

S.B: They are fine as far as I know. This is obviously had a big impact on them and they have been so upset since this whole thing happened.

BCM: *Do they approve of your decision?*

S.B: They said they respect my decision.

BCM: *You're a young woman from Iran. What is life like for a young woman in Iran?*

S.B: Life in Iran for women is very difficult. We have to wear a headscarf and dress in the way we don't like. I am just one of many Iranian women who don't like wearing a hijab. It's sort of a public secret - most women hate it but everyone wears it. Inside our homes, women don't wear them. When we see other people - go to or receive guests - we don't wear a hijab.

BCM: *How difficult is it for women in Iran to voice their concerns about these and other issues you have opinions about?*

S.B: There are some people who have protested against wearing a hijab and they

NO COMMENT FROM THE IRANIAN CHESS FEDERATION

BCM contacted the president of the Iranian Chess Federation, Mr Mehrdad Pahlavanzadeh, for a comment on the situation surrounding Shohreh Bayat. We did not receive any response by the time this issue went to print.

THE PLIGHT OF IRANIAN ATHLETES FROM THE COUNTRY

Iran recently saw the defection of several chess players, most notably the talented 16-year-old Alireza Firouzja, who appeared at the World Rapid and Blitz Championship playing under the flag of FIDE. This happened after Firouzja decided not to follow the decision of (now his former) chess federation of Iran, which forbade their players from taking part because of participants from Israel. Previously, the Iranian Chess Federation forced Firouzja to forfeit the game against FM Or Bronstein in the 2019 Grenke Chess Open.

WGM Mitra Hejazipour was expelled from the Iranian federation earlier this year for not wearing the hijab at the World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship in Moscow. IM Dorsa Derakshani was kicked out of the national team in 2017 for appearing without the hijab at the Gibraltar Chess Festival. By the time that happened Derakshani was already living in France.

Also, in January, Kimia Alizadeh - Taekwondo champion and Iran's only female Olympic medallist - announced that she had defected and is now in Germany. In a statement posted on Instagram, she said she would no longer wear the hijab, adding that she'd been used as 'a tool' by Iranian officials: 'Whatever they said, I wore... Every sentence they ordered, I repeated.' She argued that her decision to abandon her country was difficult but necessary.

Although restrictions have somewhat relaxed over the years, most tournaments in Iran are still for one gender only. A lot of dust was raised when in 2017 the World Chess Championship in Tehran, where players had to wear the headscarf.

As Shohreh Bayat explained for BCM, 'don't want to be involved in politics. However, the government involves them in this and they really feel uncomfortable about it. The reason why Iranian players are ordered not to appear at certain events where Israelis are participating is that if they were to be paired with them and if they refused to play, the International Olympic Committee will ban us and then we can't go to the Olympics.'

have been imprisoned. There is no right to talk about that in Iran. The government is based on Islam and Islam has priority to everything and we're not in a position to question it.

BCM: What is your plan now?

S.B: I'm hoping to stay in the UK and am waiting to see if the British government lets me stay here or not.

BCM: And when it comes to Iran, when do you think you will see your country again?

S.B: I think I won't see Iran for a very long time. Especially now that Princess

Farah Pahlavi - the former empress of Iran - sent out a Tweet supporting me.

BCM: What about your family – do you think they will be able to see you or visit you?

S.B: I don't know. They haven't tried to go abroad so they don't know. In Iran, you never know when you will be stopped.

BCM: And you will continue to work in chess?

S.B: Yes, that's my plan.

FIDE WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH 2020 4TH TO 25TH JANUARY 2020



JU WENJUN DEFENDS TITLE IN TIE-BREAK A CHANCER AND A WINNER

By GM Aleksandar Colovic

Photo: Fide.com official / Michael Friedman and Eteri Kublashvili

After a very long time, FIDE finally decided to bring order to the Women's World Championship cycle. By making certain adjustments, the women's cycle is now almost identical to that of the Open.

This meant that the winner of the Candidates tournament (analysed in-depth in the June issue of BCM), 21-year old Russian Aleksandra Goryachkina, was to meet the Champion, 28-year old Chinese Ju Wenjun, in a 12-game match. In case of a tie, there would be a tie-break of rapid and blitz games with an eventual Armageddon if required.

The recently introduced reforms of the women's cycle and the hugely increased prize fund will increase the importance and popularity of women's chess

THE MATCH AND WOMEN'S CHESS

With these reforms the women's cycle finally becomes stable and, as a result of this stability and the hugely increased prize fund (half a million euros), the importance and popularity of the cycle and the match, in particular, can be expected to rise even further.

Both Ju Wenjun and Aleksandra Goryachkina are rated almost 2600. This means they are very strong Grandmasters and, with the thorough preparation for the match, their strength is likely to be even bigger. What will be interesting to see in the next cycle is whether Hou Yifan, undoubtedly the strongest female player in the world, will take part. She has finished her studies at Oxford University and it appears to be at a crossroads, whether to continue her academic career or return to chess.

All world championship matches are tense and this one was no exception. If we compare this match to the one between Carlsen and Caruana we can notice a difference in quality, but this is

only natural - the quality of 2600-rated players is not the same as the quality of the 2800-rated players. However, what was lacking in quality was more than compensated for with excitement and decisive games.

When people say that women's chess is 'women's chess', I think they are failing to understand that 'women's chess' doesn't exist. There is good chess and bad chess and the best women in the world at the moment are rated around 2600. If you take two men Grandmasters of the same level and have them play a high-tension match for an unprecedented prize fund, we would see approximately the same quality, excitement and swings as we did in Shanghai and Vladivostok. Tension and stress are the same for all.

When people say that women's chess is 'women's chess', I think they are failing to understand that 'women's chess' doesn't exist. There is good chess and bad chess.

The opening ceremony of the Chinese leg of the match.
English GM and FIDE VP Nigel Short in the middle



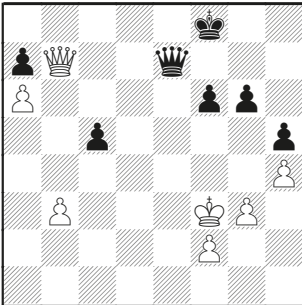
HOW THE MATCH UNFOLDED

The match took place from 5 to 24 January and started with three hard-fought draws in Shanghai. It was the Challenger who was pressing, but the Champion defended well. The first notable thing was Goryachkina's new weapon against 1 e4 - instead of her beloved Caro-Kann (where she suffered at the end of the Candidates last year) she switched to the Berlin Defence. The match showed the correctness of her choice as she never experienced problems in it.

In Game 4, somewhat against the run of play in the match, Ju Wenjun took the chance she was given.

Ju Wenjun - Aleksandra Goryachkina

WCh Women 2020
Shanghai/Vladivostok CHN (4)



The game should have been an uneventful draw as White chose a harmless line in the Slav, but, quite uncharacteristically for her, Goryachkina started to give concessions in a dry, technical position. Now she is under pressure, but the position should still be a draw.

45...♞e8?? The pawn endgame is lost for Black, but this wasn't easy to see. In fact, at this point, both players failed to understand that.

45...g5 was a good move to draw, creating immediate counterplay; 45...♞d8 was the other acceptable option.

46.♞d5? Ju Wenjun has not managed to calculate the consequences of the pawn endgame so she continues to press in a queen endgame.

46.♞xe7+! ♞xe7 47.g4! transposes back to the game at move 52.

46...♞f8 47.♞f4 ♞c7+ 48.♞e3?! The king doesn't have promising options from here.

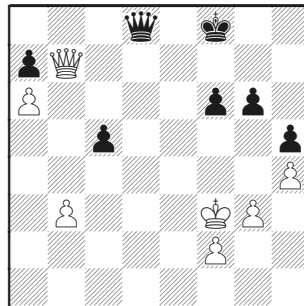
48.♞e4! is better, so the king can come to d5 after the queen liberates that square. This is important as after 48...♞e7? (48...♞c8 is better 49.♞d6+ ♞f7 50.♞d5 looks scary for Black, but after 50...g5 which is the only move, she has enough counterplay.)

49.♞b7 ♞d6 50.♞xc7+ ♞xc7 51.♞d5 is possible, with a decisive penetration to the kingside via the e6-square. 51...♞b6 52.♞e6 and White wins.

48...♞c8 This is also possible.

After 48...♞e7 49.♞b7 ♞d6 Black shouldn't fear a pawn endgame as White doesn't have the g4-idea at her disposal, nor can the king come to d5.

49.♞b7 ♞d8 50.♞f3



A subtle trap. Repeating the position, White offers the same option to Black as on move 45. Since Black was playing to draw she assumed that since White avoided the exchange then she would do the same



Ju Wenjun

now; repetition was the safest option to put pressure on the side trying to win, so she looked for other ways to continue.

50...♞e7?? Goryachkina assumed that the conclusion both of them had reached earlier was still valid.

50...♞e8 is the only way to keep equality, as Black is ready to start giving checks if White takes on a7: 51.♞xa7 ♞d5+ 52.♞e3 ♞d4+ 53.♞e2 ♞e4+ with a perpetual check - the queen on a7 is too isolated to help the king hide from the checks.

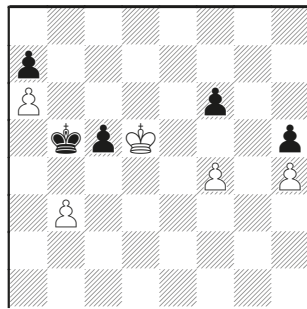
51.♞xe7+! But by this point the Champion managed to calculate better and found the win.

51...♞xe7 52.g4! The only move to win.

52...♞d6 52...hxg4+ 53.♞xg4 ♞e6 54.f4 with the idea of f5 54...f5+ 55.♞g5 ♞f7 56.h5 is an elementary win as Black will lose the f5-pawn because of White's holding the opposition.

53.gxh5 gxh5 54.♞e4 Threatening ♞f5. White also keeps the option to go to the queenside.

54...♞c6 55.f4 ♞b5 56.♞d5!



Opposition and outflanking are White's winning techniques in this endgame.

56...f5 It appears that Black has the opposition, but Black loses because she cannot keep the king close to the b3-pawn in order to be able to enter a race when White goes after the f5-pawn and keeps the opposition at the same time.

56...♞b4 57.f5 ♞b5 58.♞d6 ♞b6 Black holds the opposition but is too far from the b3-pawn, so now White has the time to go after the f6-pawn. 59.♞e6 ♞b5 60.♞xf6 ♞b4 61.♞e6 ♞xb3 62.f6 and White promotes earlier.

57.♞d6 ♞b6 58.♞d7 Here's the problem. The b7-square is taken, so Black cannot keep the opposition.

58...♞a5 59.♞c7 ♞xa6 60.♞c6 ♞a5 61.♞xc5 ♞a6 After 61...a6 62.b4+ ♞a4 63.♞c4 ♞a3 64.b5 White exchanges all queenside pawns and wins the ones on the kingside.

62.b4 ♞b7 63.♞d5 White picks up the f5-pawn as the black king is exactly where it needs to be when the pawn on b4 falls - White will promote on f8 with check.

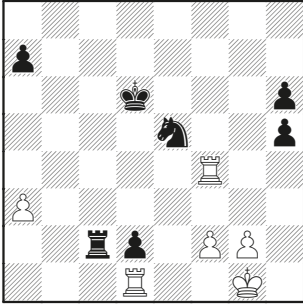
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An unexpected win for the Champion, but Goryachkina was able to strike back immediately in the next game and it

appeared that the psychological initiative returned to her.

Aleksandra Goryachkina - Ju Wenjun

WCh Women 2020
Shanghai/Vladivostok CHN (5)



Earlier in the game White was winning and then she let it slip on more than one occasion, so here Black has enough counterplay with the pawn on d2.

34...♖c6?? The idea is to plant a knight on d4 after ...♗e5 and ...♘d4, but this is too slow.

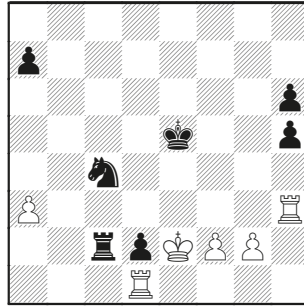
34...♘c4 was natural, threatening ...♗e5 and ...♘b2. 35.♗f1 (35.♗d4+ ♗e5 36.♗d7 a5 37.♗f1 ♗c3 Black's domination prevents White from improving her position and the position is equal.) 35...♗e5 36.♗h4 ♘b2 37.♗e2 ♘xd1 38.♗xd1 ♗a2 39.♗xh5+ ♗e4 Black's activity easily compensates for the pawn deficit after 40.♗xh6 ♗xa3 41.♗xd2 ♗a2+ with a perpetual.

35.♗f1 Now the king comes to e2 and Black doesn't have good coordination to deal with the threats.

35...♗e5 36.♗f3 ♘a5 Eventually going to c4, getting there in three moves instead of one.

36...♘d4 must have been the initial idea, but after 37.♗e3+ White plays ♗d3 next and picks up the d2-pawn.

37.♗e2 ♘c4 38.♗h3



With the king on e2 everything is under control and White can safely pick up the h5-pawn. Then she will start pushing her own passed pawn.

38...♗a2 39.♗xh5+ ♗d4 40.♗h4+ ♗c5 41.♗h3 a5 42.f4 Black cannot organise anything substantial on the queenside and the f-pawn decides the game.

42...♗d5 43.♗f3 ♗e6 44.g4 a4 45.♗h3 ♗d5 46.f5 ♗e5 47.♗c3 ♘xa3 48.♗c5+ ♗d6 49.f6 ♘c2 50.♗c4 ♘a3 51.♗f4 ♗d5

1-0

Games 6 and 7 saw Ju Wenjun play twice with White (the same principle as in the other World Championship matches, the logic being that both players should be able to have White after the rest day) and it was surprising that she kept trying to obtain something against the Berlin, both times unsuccessfully (though she did get some pressure in Game 7).

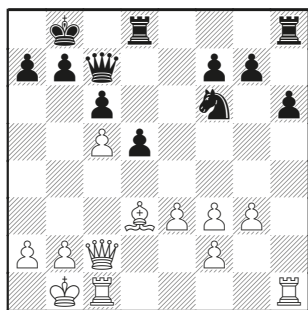
With no problems with Black and always with pressure when playing White the match seemed to be going Goryachkina's way and it was no surprise that she won in Game 8.



Aleksandra Goryachkina

Aleksandra Goryachkina - Ju Wenjun

WCh Women 2020
Shanghai/Vladivostok CHN (8)



In the Queen's Gambit Declined Exchange Variation Ju Wenjun was playing a bit too directly for exchanges and here White is slightly better because of the better light-squared bishop. Still, Black is very solid and a move like 19...h5 would keep the position acceptable.

19...d4 Not bad, but not a very good practical decision. The passed pawn is blockaded and now White obtains a mobile central majority, making her play much easier.

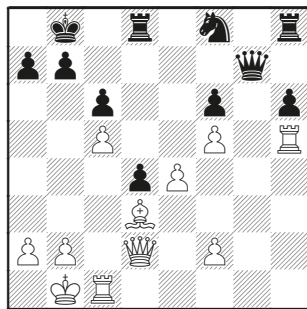
20.e4 g5 Black attempts to establish a blockade on the dark squares, but this is difficult to achieve.

21.♖d2 ♘d7 21...♖e7 was better: the queen is more active on e7 than on c7, as from e7 she attacks the c5-pawn and the e4-pawn.

22.f4 f6 23.♞h5 Natural and strong. The pawn on h6 is weak and White plays against it.

23...gxf4 24.gxf4 ♘f8 The idea is to play ...♘e6, but with her next White plays on domination against the knight.

25.f5 ♖g7?

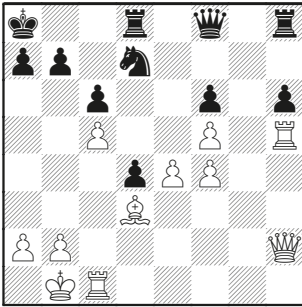


Passively defending h6 gives White free hands. Generally speaking, Ju Wenjun was mostly resorting to passive defence in the match and she was lucky to avoid losses in several games.

25...♘d7 was the last chance to stay in the game. After **26.f4 ♞hg8! 27.♞xh6 ♞g4** Black has good counterplay against both f4 and c5.

26.♖f4+ ♖a8 27.♖h2 ♘d7 28.f4 White has successfully coordinated her pieces and is ready for a breakthrough.

28...♖f8?



Becoming passive again and this time it's decisive. The idea is to put pressure against the c5-pawn by simple means (followed by ...b6), but White is better prepared for the opening of the game.

28...♖dg8 was the active defence Black had to go for. An illustrative line is 29.b4 (29.♙c4 ♜e8 forces White to come back with the bishop.) 29...♔g3 30.♙c4 ♔e3! 31.♙xg8 ♜xg8 32.♔h1 ♔xf4 and the exposed white king with the eternal knight on e5 give Black good counterplay.

29.b4 b6 Following the plan, but after White's next move the position opens in her favour.

30.e5! bxc5 31.♔h1 Black cannot defend along the long diagonal as the bishop on d3 also enters the game.

31...♗b8 32.♙e4 ♜h7 33.♜xc5 White crashes through as the c6-pawn falls.

33...♜b7 34.♙xc6 ♗xc6 35.♔xc6 d3 36.♜b5 ♜db8 37.e6 Black is tied down and the sole d3-pawn is easily controlled.

37...♔d8 38.♜h1 d2 39.♜d5 ♔c8 40.♔xc8 ♜xb4+ 41.♙a1 ♜xc8 42.♜xd2 ♙b7 43.♜d7+ ♙b6 44.e7 ♜e8 45.♜e1

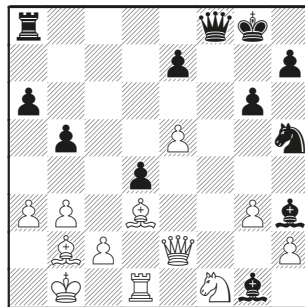
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THE TURNING-POINT OF THE MATCH

After such a convincing win, together with the fact that Ju Wenjun didn't seem able to pose problems, it seemed that the match was almost decided in Goryachkina's favour. She seemed more determined and was playing well. But then came the turning-point in the match.

Ju Wenjun - Aleksandra Goryachkina

WCh Women 2020
Shanghai/Vladivostok CHN (9)



In a must-win situation, Ju Wenjun abandoned 1.e4 since the Berlin was just too solid and tried 1. ♘f3 d5 2. b3. Black was fine after the opening, but then things started to become volatile, with both players missing things. Here comes the critical moment.

21.a4? A stunning move! More of a stunningly bad one, though. White voluntarily opens up her king as she didn't see another way forward. This clearly shows how tense the players were, as White had a simple and natural way to play on.

21.♔e4 attacks the d4-pawn and after 21...♜d8 22.♔c6 White has activated the queen and keeps harassing Black's queenside. It is important to note that her king is much safer and she can continue to play with ideas like ♜d2-e4.

21...bxa4 22.bxa4?! Continuing with the idea, which was to obtain the c4-square for the bishop, from where it can also drop back to b3 to cover the b-file.

22.♘d2! was much stronger, though, as after 22...♙e3 23.bxa4 ♖c8 24.♙c4+ ♗h8 25.e6: compared with the game, the bishop on e3 is hanging.

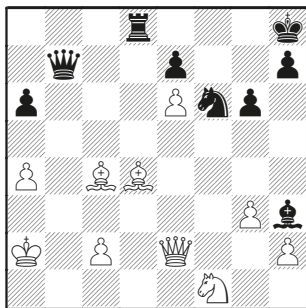
22...♖c8! Now the position is a complete mess.

23.♙c4+ ♗h8 24.e6 Now 24.♘d2 allows 24...♙g4!

24...♙f6 25.♖xd4 The move is objectively bad, but it's aggressive and puts pressure on Black. And, quite surprisingly, it worked! But this was part of Ju's plan as the alternative gave no chances to play for a win.

After 25.♙xd4 ♙xd4 26.♖xd4 ♖c5 thanks to the open white king Black has good compensation.; 25.♘d2 ♙g4 26.♙f3 ♖b7! is the idea that saves Black: 27.♖xg1 ♖b8 28.♙b3 ♙xf3 29.♖c4 ♙d5 30.♖xd4 ♙xb3 31.cxb3 ♖xb3 and again it is the counterplay against the white king that is the defining factor in this position.

25...♙xd4 26.♙xd4 ♖b7+ 27.♗a2 ♖d8?



Goryachkina misses the golden opportunity. This is the moment the match turned. Black is still better but is not winning and the position remains unclear where it is White

who is creating the threats. It seems that starting from this move she somehow became disconnected and started to play bad moves.

After 27...♖b4! 28.♙xf6+ exf6 29.♙b3 ♗g7 White has nothing to show for the material deficit and is lost.

28.♙b2 ♖b8? It is difficult to understand why Black thought it important to first chase away the bishop on b4 and then play ...♖b8.

The move 28...♖c6 also forces 29.♙b3 and now after 29...h5, giving the king some luft, Black is still perfectly fine (and objectively better).

29.♙b3 ♖g2? A third bad move in a row is too many. Things were unclear already, but now White is winning.

29...h5 was again preferable, improving the king, but the time Black wasted means that White is no longer worse and the position continues to be tense after 30.♖e5 ♗h7 31.♙e3.

30.♖e5 This forces Black to return the exchange as the threat is to take on f6.

30.♖c4 was the engine's way to win, with typical tactical shots that are tough to find for a human: 30...♖xf1 31.♖c7 ♖e8 32.♖d7! ♗g8 33.♙xf6 ♖xf6 34.♖xe8+ ♗g7 35.♖c6 with a clear pawn up.

30...♖xb3 31.cxb3 The smoke cleared and White is much better. Even though Black will capture the e6-pawn and establish material equality, the fact that White can easily advance on the queenside means that her position is much easier to play. Additionally, all queen exchanges favour White as her king is more easily activated on the queenside, supporting the advance of the pawns.

31...♖c6 The only move.

31...♖xf1? loses to 32.♖c7 followed by ♖c7.



32.♘d2 ♕xe6 33.♔a3 ♖g8 34.♘f3 ♜d5 Generally speaking Black should keep the queens on the board as then she has more counterplay when White advances her pawns on the queenside. The point here is that after the exchange Black recaptures with a knight and prevents the white king from coming to b4.

35.♜b8+! 35.♜xd5? ♘xd5 36.b4 ♘e3 gives Black enough counterplay in view of the threat ...♘c4.

35...♔g7 36.♘e5 ♜c5+ 37.♜b4 ♜xb4+? If on the previous occasion the exchange favoured Black because of concrete circumstances, here the general logic was valid - Black had to keep the queens.

After 37...♜c7 38.♜d4 White is better, but Black is resisting.

38.♔xb4 Now the king freely moves forward.

38...♔f8 39.♘c4 ♘e4 40.♗d4 ♔e8? Black doesn't even try to prevent the white king from going forward.

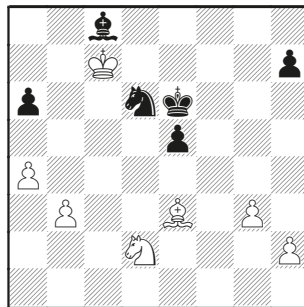
After 40...♘d6 41.♘d2 ♘b7, she could have hoped to put up stiffer resistance.

41.♔a5 ♘d6 42.♘d2 Of course, White won't exchange into a pure opposite-coloured bishop-endgame unless there is a forced win.

42...♗c8 43.♔b6 ♔d8 44.♗e5 With such a huge difference in the activity of the pieces, the game is decided in White's favour.

44...♔d7 45.♗f4 g5!? A good practical chance: Black sacrifices a pawn to get her own passed pawn going,

46.♗xg5 e5 47.♗e3 ♔e6 48.♔c7



48...♗d7? Alas, Goryachkina fails to squeeze the most from her idea.

48...♔d5! had to be played, to be as aggressive as possible. White is still winning, but she would have had to be precise: 49.♖c4 ♗xc4 50.bxc4+ ♕e4 51.♗b6! this is how White should play (*The queen endgame after 51.♕xc8? ♕xe3 52.c5 ♖f2 53.c6 e4 54.♖b7 e3 55.c7 e2 56.c8♖ e1♖ should be drawn in view of the great activity of the black king.*) 51...♗g4 52.♖b7 ♔d3 53.c5 e4 54.c6 e3 55.c7 e2 56.♗f2 wins for White.

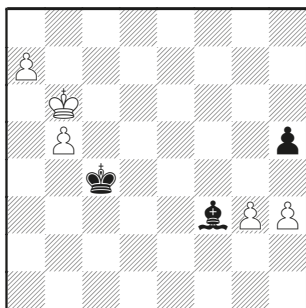
49.♗c5 ♖f5 50.♖b6 ♔d5 51.♗b1! From c3 the knight will push back the black king and will control the e4 and e2-squares.

51...e4 After 51...♕e4 52.♕xa6 ♔d3 53.♗a3 ♗d4 54.♗c4 ♗c8+ 55.♖b6 ♗xb3 56.♗xe5+ White is two pawns up.

52.♗c3+ ♕e5 53.♕xa6 e3 White's queenside pawns go quickly, while White can sacrifice a piece for the e-pawn and win with the pawns.

54.a5 ♗d4 55.b4 ♗g4 56.♖b6 e2 57.♗xd4+ ♕xd4 58.♗xe2+! The bishop cannot control the passed pawns, which are supported by the king.

58...♗xe2 59.a6 ♗f3 60.a7 h5 61.b5 ♖c4 62.h3



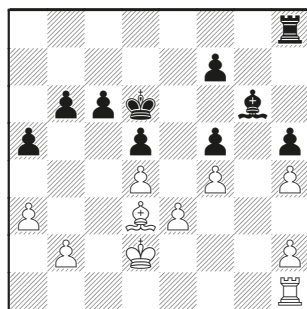
When the bishop moves from f3 White will create a third passed pawn. A dramatic win to level the score!

THE MOMENT GORYACHKINA LOST HER COMPOSURE

Game 9 was definitely the turning point of the match, as after it Goryachkina seemed to lose her composure. In Game 10, playing White, she pushed too hard and managed to lose this endgame:

Aleksandra **Goryachkina** - Ju Wenjun

WCh Women 2020
Shanghai/Vladivostok CHN (10)



The Champion stuck to her usual repertoire and chose the Queen's Gambit Declined with the most solid option of an immediate endgame but with an awful bishop on g6. Black's claim that this is a fortress is difficult to refute and in retrospect, this was a fantastic psychological decision by Ju. Feeling that the match was going her way and completely devastated by losing Game 9 which she could have won, Goryachkina lost objectivity and played for a win when it was impossible to do so.

24.b4 If White wants a draw she can just mark time, but Goryachkina felt she had to push. However, this opens the a-file that only Black can use.

24...axb4 25.axb4 ♖a8 26.b5 Another questionable decision, but in line with White's "play for a win" agenda.

26...c5 27.dxc5+ bxc5 28.♖b1 ♕c7 29.b6+ ♕b7 30.♖b5 ♖c8 Black has stabilised the

1-0

position and the bishop can return to play after ...f6. The pair of pawns on c5 and d5 gives Black a comfortable shield, while the pawn on b6 needs constant defence. White voluntarily sharpened the position and took strategic risks and, eventually, these turned against her.

0-1

All of a sudden the match that was going so tough seemed won for Ju Wenjun. Leading 5.5-4.5, with two games to go, she needed two draws (or a win) to defend her title. This again felt against the run of play, as it was Goryachkina who was 'the doer' of all the action, especially in Game 10. Normally in matches, being active and pushing is rewarded and here it seemed that it would be punished.

After the uneventful Game 11, when Ju basically achieved a draw immediately with the choice of opening variation in the Berlin, it was all set for the all-or-nothing last game.

Playing White in a must-win situation Goryachkina went for an off-beat line, an approach similar to Anand's win in the last classical game of the match with Karpov in Lausanne in 1998.

Aleksandra Goryachkina - Ju Wenjun

WCh Women 2020
Shanghai/Vladivostok CHN (12)

1.d4 d5 2.♘c3 Anand chose the Trompowsky in the aforementioned game, while Goryachkina chooses the system made popular by Jobava and Rapport. This was a surprise for Ju, who was obviously dealing with her nerves as she spent 20 minutes on her next move.

2...♗f6 3.♙f4 White's approach is just to get a game, but nowadays, with modern preparation, that means 'getting a game that I have analysed and understood better than my opponent.'

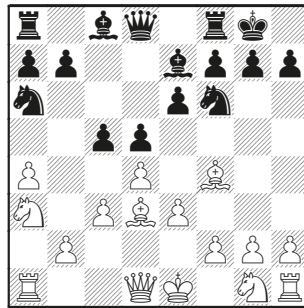
3...e6 One of the many possible moves

here. Black will obtain acceptable play but without concrete preparation for this game, she will have to start thinking from the start.

4.♘b5 ♗a6 5.e3 ♙b4+ A rare option compared to the more common 5...c6 and 5...♙e7.

6.c3 ♙e7 7.a4 Generally a useful move, allowing for the knight retreat to a3.

7...0-0 8.♙d3 c6 9.♘a3 c5



Black starts play in the centre with the knight stranded on a6 and this allows White to obtain some initiative.

A bit more patience with 9...♗b8 was more to the point: for example, 10.♗f3 ♗bd7 11.h3 b6 12.0-0 ♙b7 with a compact position for Black as now it is White who needs to reroute her knight from the rim.

10.♗f3 ♗e4 Black feels she should play in the centre, but White can undermine the stronghold on e4.

10...♗h5 was an alternative, after 11.♙e5 cxd4 (11...f6? runs into 12.♗g5! g6 13.♗xh7! fxe5 14.♙xg6 with a winning attack.) 12.exd4 f6 13.♙g3 (now 13.♗g5? doesn't work since after 13...g6 14.♗xh7 fxe5 15.♙xg6 Black has 15...♗f4! thanks to the absence of the pawn from e3, hence the exchange on d4 on move 11.) 13...g6 14.♗c2 leads to a double-edged position that undoubtedly suited White in the match situation.



11.h3 f5 12.♘b5 White perhaps thought that the knight might end up stranded on a3 if Black managed to play ...♗c7.

Still, after 12.0-0 ♗c7 13.♗e5, followed by f3, White has a good play.

12...c4 13.♗xe4 White doesn't lose time by retreating, since then Black could have played ...♗d7xb5 when the pawn on b5 would be difficult to defend.

13.♗c2 ♗d7 14.♗e5

Black finally reroutes the knight.

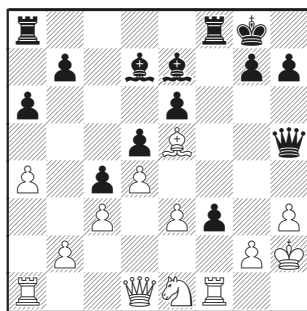
15.0-0 a6 16.♗a3 ♗d7 17.♗c2?? The knight doesn't have too many prospects from here.

17.b3!? made more sense, to make use of the knight on a3. 17...cxb3 18.♙xb3 ♙b6 19.♙a2 with c4 to come.

17...♙e8 18.f3 This is White's only way to create something.

18...♗xe5 19.♗xe5 ♗d7 20.♗e1 The knight is still passive, but the pawn on a4 needed protection.

20...♙h5 21.♖h2 exf3?!



Perhaps Black was afraid of a possible g4 and f4, but that wasn't very scary. With this exchange she finally allows the knight to become active.

21...a5 22.g4 ♙e8 23.f4 ♖a6 with ideas like ...♖b6 and ...b5 give Black good play on the queenside while White cannot do much on the kingside.

22.♗xf3 ♗e8 Black is fine here, but White doesn't have any bad pieces any more so she can play freely.

23.♙e1 Threatening e4 or ♗f4, followed by ♗e5.

23...♙g6 24.♗f4 Liberating e5 for the knight.

24...♙e4 Physically blockading the e-pawn, but the queen is a bad blocker!

A neutral move like 24...h6 was preferable, as after 25.♘e5 ♙e4 now the queen cannot be attacked since the knight is already on e5.

25.a5 A useful move, the pawn gets away from the square where it was attacked by the bishop.

25...h6 26.♘d2 Here we see the difference: the queen is harassed.

26...♙h7 There was no need to take the queen so far away.

26...♙d3 was preferable and more annoying for White 27.e4 dxe4 28.♙xe4 (28.♘xe4 ♖c6 the active bishop more than compensates for the weak pawn on e6.) 28...♙xe4 29.♘xe4 ♖c6 with an equal endgame thanks to the strong light-squared bishop.

27.e4 dxe4 28.♖e5 28.♙g3! is the engine's preference, again showing why it was preferable to place the queen on d3.

28...♖c8? A rather vague move.

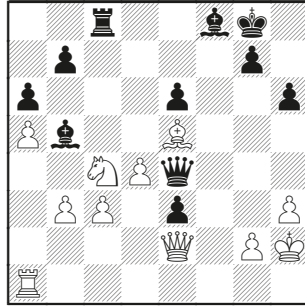
28...♖xf1 29.♘xf1 ♖c6 30.♘e3 ♖f8 made more sense, as all Black's pieces enter the game. After 31.♘xc4 ♙g6 the game is balanced.

29.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 30.♙e2 White would rather take on c4 in order not to open the long diagonal for the light-squared bishop. Black is experiencing problems now.

30...e3? Nerves... This 'activity' only weakens Black's position further since the pawn on e3 cannot be expected to live long.

30...♙g6 was preferable: 31.♘xc4 ♖b5 32.b3 ♖e7 kept the position with mutual chances.

31.♘xc4 ♖b5 32.b3 ♙e4



This was Black's idea. It appears that she has enough activity, but after White's next Black's position falls apart.

33.♖f1! With threats like ♖f3 or ♖f4, winning the e3-pawn.

33...♙c6 34.♙xe3 ♙e8 Covering the f7-square, but it's clear Black has nothing for the lost pawn and is also very passive.

34...♖xc4? loses to 35.bxc4 ♙xc4 36.♙f3, coming to f7 with devastating effect.

35.♙e2 ♙g6 36.♖f3 White stabilised the position and she went on to win without too much trouble on move 60.

1-0

An amazing comeback by Goryachkina, truly showing a tough character when it mattered most!

Ju Wenjun defended her title in an extremely hard-fought match. She did so by taking all the chances she got, while Goryachkina, the more prolific of the two when it came to creating chances, was wasteful and, in the end, this was the decisive factor

THE TIE-BREAK SURPRISE

Again the match seemed to be going Goryachkina's way. After drawing the match in the last game the psychological initiative was again with her. But the tie-break was another surprise. Goryachkina had good (or great) chances in 3 of the 4 games but converted none. Ju Wenjun had chances in just one game.

Ju Wenjun - Aleksandra Goryachkina

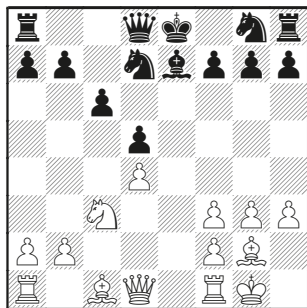
WCh Women TB 2020 Vladivostok RUS (3)

1. ♖f3 d5 2. g3 After getting absolutely nowhere after 1. e4 that was met with the Berlin, for the tie-break Ju Wenjun switched to the Reti starting with 2. g3, unlike the 2. b3 that brought her the win in Game 9.

2...c6 3. ♘g2 ♘g4 4.0-0 ♘d7 5. h3 ♘h5 6. d4 e6 7. c4 ♘e7 8. cxd5 This at first sight innocuous line gives White some ideas for an initiative. They are based on the knight jump to e5 followed by f4 or the preparation for a central push f3 and e4.

8...exd5 9. ♖c3 ♘xf3 Preventing the knight jump to e5 which could have followed in case of 9...♘gf6.

10. exf3!?



An ambitious approach and improvement over the first game of the tie-break when Ju played the natural 10. ♘f3 and was outplayed.

10...♘gf6 11. h4 The doubled f-pawn controls the e4-square and limits the knight on f6. With her last move, White activates the light-squared bishop via h3.

11...0-0 12. ♘h3 ♘b6?! The knight will be rather useless here.

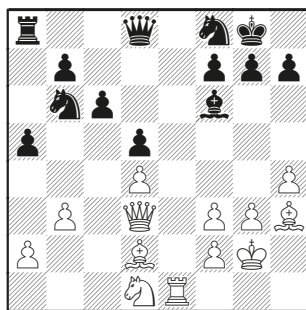
12...♗e8 with the idea of ...♘f8 and possibly to e6 would have been more compact as the knight from e6 exerts some pressure on the d4-pawn.

13. ♗d3 ♗e8 14. b3 White is successfully limiting the movement of Black's knights.

14...♘fd7 15. ♗e1 ♘f6 16. ♘d2 a5 17. ♗g2 Black doesn't have an active plan while White slowly improves her position.

17...♘f8 Black feels the awkwardness of her knights and tries to relocate them, but they simply cannot find decent squares.

18. ♗xe8 ♗xe8 19. ♗e1 ♗d8 20. ♘d1!



The white knight can find good squares via e3 en route to f5 or g4.

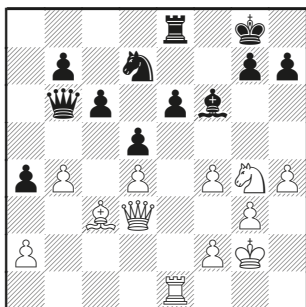
20...♘bd7 21. ♘e3 ♗b6 22. ♘c3 a4 23. b4 ♘e6 This allows a favourable transformation.

Standing still after 23...g6 was hardly easier to play. 24. ♘g4 ♘g7 25. ♗d2 with ♘h6 to come.

24. ♘xe6! fxe6 25. ♘g4 ♗e8 26. f4



The victor, Ju Wenjun, interviewed by journalists



White gave away the bishop pair but got a clear weakness to play against - the pawn on e6 and the e5-square coupled with the possibility to advance on the kingside make White's position strategically winning.

26...♔d8 27.h5 h6 28.♖e3 The immediate 28 b5 was possible.

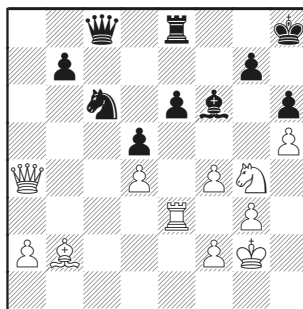
28...♔h8 29.b5! Opening a second front.

29...♘b8 30.♖e2 cxb5 After 30...♖d7 31.f5 wins the pawn on e6.

31.♖xb5 ♖c8 31...♖d7 is an attempt to keep the material balance, but White can choose whether to play a winning endgame or middlegame. **32.♖xd7 (32.♖b1**

keeping the queens and threatening ♖g6 is also quite strong.) 32...♘xd7 33.f5 ♘f8 34.♘xf6 gxf6 35.♖e1 White switches attack to the queenside and Black cannot cope. **35...♔g7 36.♖b1 ♖e7 37.♙b4 ♖d7 38.♙xf8+ ♔xf8 39.fxe6** with a winning rook endgame in view of the many weaknesses in Black's camp.

32.♖xa4 ♘c6 33.♙b2



White is a clear pawn up and keeps all the advantages of her position.

33...♖e7 34.♖c2 ♖e8 35.♘xf6 gxf6 36.♙a3 ♖g7 37.f5! The final assault. In addition to all her worries, Black also has a weak king.

37...e5 After 37...xd4 38.♖d3 ♘c6 39.♙xe6 Black's position falls apart 39...♙xh5 40.♙b2 d4 41.♙xf6

38.dxe5 fxe5 39.f6 ♖g5 40.f4! ♙xh5 41.fxe5 ♖e6 The alternatives lose too.

41...♘xe5 42.♖c7; 41...♙xe5 42.♖b2! d4 43.♖xb7

42.♙g1! Avoiding a check from h3.

42...d4 43.♖g6 ♖d7 44.e6 ♖c7 45.♖xh5

1-0

A convincing victory for the Champion in the only game of the tie-break where she got a promising position after the opening.

Goryachkina found herself in the same situation as before Game 12 - she had to win to level the match. Instead of an odd opening this time she chose a very

interesting pawn sacrifice in the Semi-Tarrasch (this was Ju Wenjun's second opening in the match). The opening innovation gave her promising initiative, but this time she couldn't make the most of it and the game ended in a draw.

Ju Wenjun defended her title in an extremely hard-fought match. She did so by taking all the chances she got, while Goryachkina, the more prolific of the two when it came to creating chances, was wasteful and in the end, this was the decisive factor. Still, with the character she showed by winning Game 12 on demand, Goryachkina can look back on the match with pride and take it as a starting point of her return to another title match.

With such intensity, the Women World Championship matches can only expect to attract more attention in the future. Women's chess is finally getting the recognition it deserves.

FIDE WOMEN'S WORLD - CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH 2020													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TB
Wenjun Ju	½	½	½	1	0	½	½	0	1	1	½	0	2½
A. Goryachkina	½	½	½	0	1	½	½	1	0	0	½	1	1½

TAKING A LOOK BACK AT THE TRADITIONAL BRITISH CHESS CONGRESS



THE MOST INTERESTING GAMES FROM HASTINGS

By IM Shaun Taulbut; Photo: Sunway Chess Open - Twitter

In the January issue of BCM we briefly reported on the results of the traditional chess congress in Hastings. In this issue, we bring you some of the most interesting games from the event!

The tournament was held between 28th December 2019 and 5th January 2020. For the first time, the event was organised under the sponsorship of Caplin Systems Limited, which creates trading software and technology for financial institutions.

There were a number of grandmasters competing and the event was won by Indian GM Magesh Panchanathan with 7.5/9. Second was Edouard Romain of France with 7/9 and then four players on 6.5/9 including the top English player Simon Williams.

There were a number of decisive results in the games between the top English players including the following win by Richard Bates against Mark Hebden

Richard Bates – Mark Hebden

Hastings Masters 2019-20 Hastings ENG

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.c4 0-0
5.♙g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6

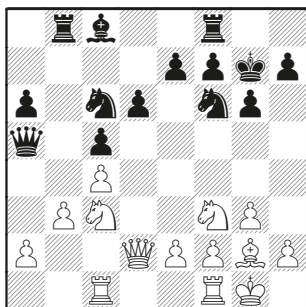
The Panno Variation; Black waits before committing himself in the centre.

7.♘c3 ♖b8 The alternative is 7...a6 with a similar plan.

8.b3 a6 Black aims to play b5 expanding on the queenside.

9.d5 ♘a5 10.♙g5 c5 11.dxc6 bxc6
Perhaps sounder is 11...♘xc6 but Black wishes to exert pressure down the half-open b-file.

12.♖c1 c5 13.♙d2 ♘c6 14.♙h6 ♖a5
15.♙xg7 ♙xg7



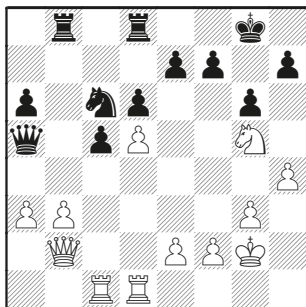
White now moves his queen to commence play against the black king whose position has been slightly weakened by the exchange of dark-squared bishops.

16. ♖b2 ♜g8 17. ♜fd1 ♜b7 17... ♜g4 is playable, aiming to exchange the white knight on f3.

18. h4 White prepares to break into the black position with h5.

18... ♜fd8 19. ♜g5 ♜b4 20. a3 ♜xg2 21. ♜xg2 After 21. axb4 cxb4 22. ♜xg2 bxc3 23. ♖xc3 ♖b6 the position is equal.

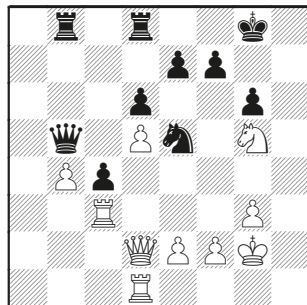
21... ♜c6 22. ♜d5 ♜xd5 23. cxd5



White has a slight advantage because his kingside play is more dangerous than Black's play against the pawn on b3, as Black has few defenders in the region of his king.

23... ♜e5 24. h5 White must quickly break into the black kingside before Black comes into his position via the b-file.

24... ♖b5 25. ♜c3 c4 26. hxg6 hxg6 27. b4 a5 28. ♖d2 axb4 29. axb4



White offers the b-pawn so that he has time to bring his queen to the kingside.

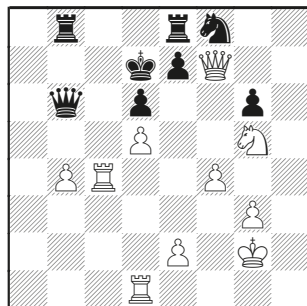
29... ♜f8 Black must escape with his king; **29... ♖xb4 30. ♜h1 ♖b2 31. ♜c2 c3 32. ♖f4 ♖xc2 33. ♖h4** mates.

30. ♖d4 ♖b6 If **30... ♖xb4 31. f4 ♖b2 32. ♜d2** wins material as the knight cannot move because of mate on h8.

31. ♖h4 ♜e8 32. f4 ♜d7 32... ♖xb4 33. fxe5 ♖xc3 34. ♖h8+ ♜d7 35. e6+ wins the Black queen on c3.

33. ♖h7 White crashes through on f7.

33... ♜f8 34. ♖xf7+ ♜d7 35. ♜xc4 ♜e8 Black sportingly allows the mate.



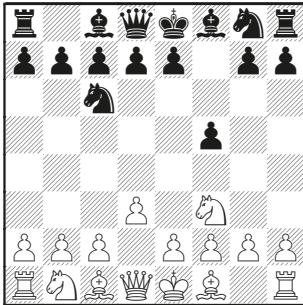
36. ♖e6+ ♜xe6 37. dxe6+ ♜d8 38. ♜f7#

David Howell beat Simon Williams in Round Five in a very interesting game, having lost to Panchanathan in Round Four.

David Howell - Simon Williams

Hastings Masters 2019-20 Hastings ENG (5.8)

1.♘f3 f5 2.d3 ♘c6



White now changes tack at the cost of a tempo to take advantage of the position of the black knight on c6, preventing Black from playing ...e5.

3.d4 e6 4.g3 ♘f6 5.♙g2 d5 6.0-0 ♙e7
7.c4 ♘e4 7...dxc4 8.♞a4 0-0 9.♞xc4 ♞d5
is an alternative.

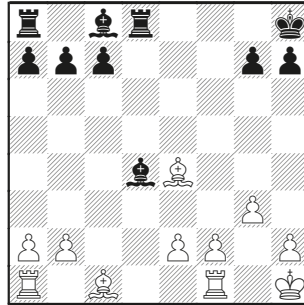
8.♘c3 0-0 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♞b3 White attacks d5 and b7 and this is awkward for Black.

10...♙h8 If 10...♙e6 11.♞xb7 ♞d7
12.♞a6 and White is better.

11.♙h1 ♙f6

Now White decides to capture the pawn on d5 which leads to an exchange of queens and minor pieces.

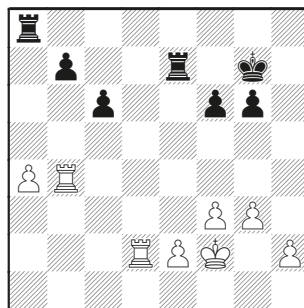
12.♞xd5 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♙xd4 14.♞xd8
♙xd8 15.♘xe4 fxe4 16.♙xe4



16...♙e8 17.f3 c6 18.♞d1 ♙f6 19.♙b1 ♙e6
20.b3 White has an extra pawn but Black has active pieces; White plays carefully to keep his extra material.

20...a5 21.♙b2 a4 22.♙xf6 gxf6 23.bxa4
Attacking b7 allows White to consolidate his position.

23...♙e7 24.♙b4 ♙xa2 25.♙d2 ♙f7
26.♙g2 ♙g7 27.♙f2 ♙g6 28.♙xg6 hxg6



A double rook ending where White has an extra pawn on the kingside.

29.h4 ♙f7 30.e4 ♙a5 31.g4 ♙e6
32.♙g3 ♙c7 33.♙d8 c5 34.♙c4 ♙d7
35.♙c8 b6 36.g5 White plays to win the pawn on g6, establishing an outpost on f6 which Black must guard.

36...fxg5 37.hxg5 ♙d6 38.♙c7 ♙d7
39.♙c6+ ♙d6 40.♙c7 ♙d7 41.♙xd7
♙xd7 42.f4 ♙e6 43.♙g4 ♙a8 44.f5+

♙e5 45.fxg6 ♜e6 46.♖c1 ♜xa4 47.♙h5
♜a2 If 47...♜xe4 48.♜f1 ♙d6 49.g7 wins.

48.♜h1 b5 49.g7 ♙f7 50.♙h6 ♙g8
51.♜f1 Black resigned as White will win
by pushing his e pawn to e7 and then
♜f8+ if he retreats his own rook to a8.

1-0

Danny Gormally lost to Harry Grieve and
finished on 6/9 along with Mark Hebden
and David Howell.

Danny Gormally - Harry Grieve

Hastings Masters 2019-20 Hastings ENG (5.10)

1.d4 f5 2.♙g5 h6 3.♙h4 g5

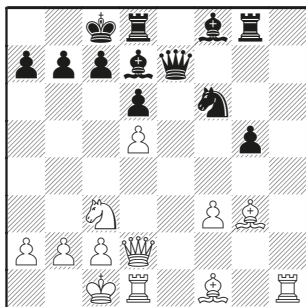
A well-known variation in which Black
cannot win a piece because of a mate threat:
better for White.

4.e3 ♘f6 5.♙g3 d6 6.h4 ♜g8 6...g4 7.♘e2,
with a good square on f4, is not inviting
for Black.

7.hxg5 hxg5 8.♘c3 White has the
advantage with the open file and better
development.

8...e6 9.♖d2 ♜e7 10.0-0 ♘c6 11.f3 11.♙c4
is good, aiming at the black rook on g8.

11...♙d7 12.e4 fxe4 13.fxe4 0-0-0 14.d5
exd5 15.exd5 ♘e5 16.♘f3 ♘xf3 17.gxf3



White has an edge, with more space and
potential play against the black king, so
Black wisely protects a7.

17...♙b8 18.♘b5 ♙xb5 19.♙xb5 ♘d7
20.♜he1 20.f4 ♘c5 21.♜de1 ♜f6 22.fxg5
♜xg5 23.♙h4 ♙h6 24.♙b1 ♜gg8 25.♙xf6
♙xd2 26.♙xd8 ♙xe1 27.♙xc7+ ♙xc7
28.♜xe1 ♙b6 29.♙c4 is slightly better for
White but maybe Black can draw.

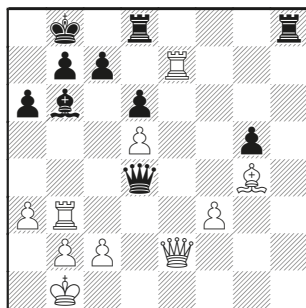
20...♜f6 21.♜e6 ♜f7 If 21...♜xf3 22.♜e3
♜h5 23.♜a5 g4 24.♜a3 a6 25.♙xa6.

22.♙b1 ♙g7 23.♜e3 ♙e5 24.♙xd7
24.♙f2 b6 (24...♘c5 25.b4) may be better.

24...♙xg3 25.♜e7 ♙f2 26.♜e2 ♜f6
27.♙g4 If 27.♜e6, ♜f5 defends.

27...♙b6 28.♜d3 28.♜e6 ♜f4 29.♜f7
♜h2 30.c3 a6 was the alternative.

28...♜h8 29.a3 a6 30.♜b3 ♜d4



The black queen escapes and White now
faces an uphill task.

31.♜d3 ♜h1+ 32.♙a2 ♜g1 Black is much
better now as his major pieces invade and
trap the white king.

33.♜d2 ♜a1+ 34.♙b3 ♜b1 35.c3 ♙c5
36.♙c4 ♜a2+ 37.♜d3 ♜xd5+ 38.♙c2
♜a2 39.♙d3 ♜d5+ 40.♙c2 ♜a2 41.♙d3
♜c1 42.♜e6 d5 43.♜d7 ♜c4#

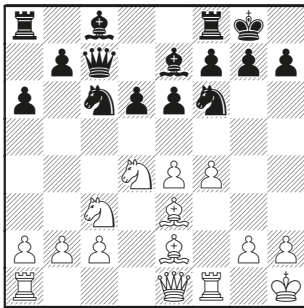
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Mark Hebden beat top-rated David Howell in Round Six and the game could have been over quickly.

Mark Hebden – David Howell

Hastings Masters 2019-20 Hastings ENG (6.3)

1.d4 e6 2.♘f3 c5 3.e4 cxd4 4.♘xd4
♘c6 5.♘c3 ♖c7 6.♙e3 a6 7.♙e2 ♘f6
8.0-0 ♙e7 9.f4 d6 10.♚e1 0-0 11.♘h1



A standard Sicilian position where White plays for a kingside attack

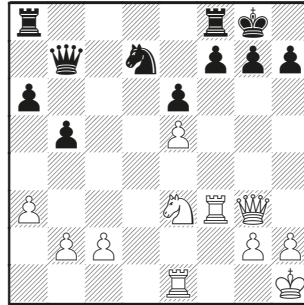
11...♘xd4 12.♙xd4 b5 13.♚g3 ♙b7 13...
b4 14.e5 is good for White.

14.a3 ♙c6 15.♖a1 ♚b7 16.e5 16.♙f3
♖ad8 is the alternative.

16...dxe5 17.fxe5 ♘d7 18.♙e3 18.♙f3 is
again the alternative.

18...♙c5 Black has equalised; White now
retreats his knight, which is better than
it looks.

19.♘d1 ♙e4 20.♙f3 ♙xf3 21.♖xf3 ♙xe3
22.♘xe3

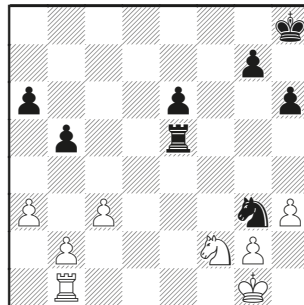


Now Black is in grave danger as the knight
is coming to g4,, eyeing f6 and h6.

22...♖ad8 23.♘g4 ♘h8 24.♚h4 ♚c7
25.c3 25.♖c3 wins; the queen is forced
away from c2 and c4 and after 25...♚b7
26.♖h3 h6 27.♘h6 wins.

25...♚c4 26.♚h5 26.♖h3 h6 27.♚g3 is also
winning, eg 27...♘h7 28.♘h6 gxh6 29.♚g5.

26...♘c5 27.♘f6 h6 28.♘g4 ♚e4 29.♖ef1
♚h7 30.♖xf7 ♖xf7 31.♚xf7 ♚d3 32.♘g1
♚e2 33.h3 ♘e4 34.♚f3 ♖d2 35.♚xe2
♖xe2 36.♘f2 ♘g3 37.♖b1 ♖xe5



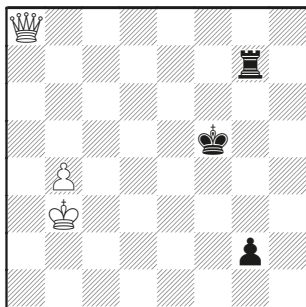
The endgame is almost equal but Mark
Hebden fights hard to take advantage of his
queenside majority.

38.♘d3 ♖e2 39.♘f4 ♖e4 40.♙f2 ♘f5
41.♘d3 a5 42.g4 ♘d6 43.♖d1 ♘f7
44.♘c5 ♖e5 45.b4 axb4 46.cxb4 ♘g5
47.♖d3 ♘e4+ 48.♘xe4 ♖xe4 49.♖e3 ♖c4

If 49...♖xe3 50.♗xe3 ♘g8 51.♗d4 ♖f7 52.♗c5 wins.

50.♖xe6 ♘g8 51.♗e2 ♖f7 52.♖e3 ♗f6 53.♗d2 ♖f4 54.♗c2 ♖d4 55.♖f3+ ♘g5 56.♖f5+ ♗h4 57.♖xb5 ♗xh3 58.a4 ♖d8 59.a5 ♖a8 60.♖b6 g5 If 60...♗xg4 61.a6 ♖f4 62.b5 ♗e4 63.♖b7 g5 64.a7 ♗d5 65.b6 ♗c6 66.♖b8 wins.

61.♖xh6+ ♗xg4 62.♗b3 ♖f5 63.♖h7 ♖g8 64.a6 g4 65.a7 g3 66.♖g7 ♖xg7 67.a8 ♖g2



It looks as though Black has some chances but White plays accurately

68.♖f3+ ♗e6 69.♖e3+ ♖f5 70.♖g1 ♗e4 71.b5 ♖f3 72.b6 ♖h7 73.♖d1+ ♗e3 74.♖c1+ ♖f3 75.♖c6+ ♖f2 76.♖c2+ ♖f3 77.♖f5+ ♗e3 78.♖g4 ♖f2 79.♖f4+ ♗g1

If 79...♗e2 80.♖e4+ ♖f2 81.♖xh7 g1 ♖ 82.♖f5+ ♗e2 83.♖e4+ ♗d2 84.♖c2+ ♗e1 85.♖c1+ ♖f2 86.♖xg1+ ♗xg1 87.b7 wins.

80.♖e4 ♖h3+ 81.♗c2 ♖f2 82.♖d4+ ♖f1 83.♖f4+ ♗e1 84.♖g4 ♖f2 85.♖xh3 g1 ♖ 86.♖f5+ ♗e1 87.♖e5+ ♖f1 88.♖a1+

1-0

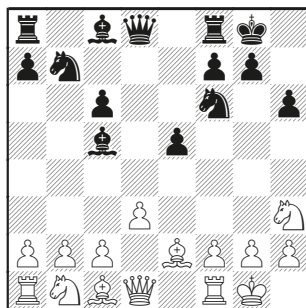
Panchanathan beat fellow Indian GM Sengupta with a sacrificial attack

Deep Sengupta - Magesh Panchanathan

Hastings Masters 2019-20 Hastings ENG (8.1)

1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♗c6 3.♖c4 ♗f6 4.♗g5 d5 5.exd5 ♗a5 6.♖b5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.♖e2 After 8...♗d3 ♗d5 9.♗f3 ♗d6 Black also has play for the pawn.

8...h6 9.♗h3 ♖c5 10.d3 0-0 11.0-0 ♗b7



Black repositions his knight; he has compensation for the pawn.

12.♗c3 ♗d4 A slow positional line; White has difficulty developing his queenside.

13.♗h1 ♗d6 14.♗g1 After 14.f4 e4 15.♗xe4 ♗xe4 16.dxe4 ♗xe4 17.♖f3 f5 18.c3 ♖b6 19.♖xd8 ♖xd8 Black has compensation for the pawn as the white queen's bishop is locked in.

14...♖e8 After 14...♖xc3 15.bxc3 ♖b8 16.♗f3 ♖e8 17.♖e3 ♗d5 18.♗d2 c5 and Black still has good play for the pawn.

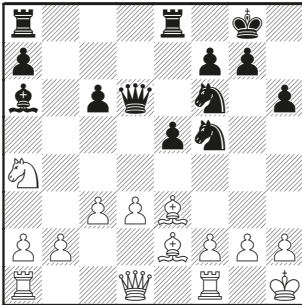
15.♗a4 15.♗f3 ♖xc3 16.bxc3 ♖b8 is the alternative.

15...♗f5 Also possible was 15...a6 16.c3 ♖a7 retaining the dark-squared bishop.

16.♗f3 ♖a6 Black puts pressure on d3, thus making c3 not so attractive.

17.♗xd4 ♖xd4 18.c3 18.c4 is worth consideration trying to block the black queen bishop.

18...♖d6 19.♙e3



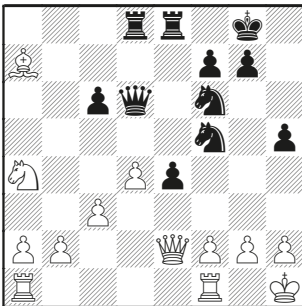
Black has pressure against d3

19...♖ad8 19...♗xe3 20.fxe3 ♗d5 21.♖d2 ♙b5 is slightly better for Black eg 22.b3 (22.c4 ♙xa4 23.cxd5 cxd5; 22.♙d1 ♗f6 23.♙c2 ♖ad8 with strong play) 22...♙xa4 23.bxa4 ♖c5.

20.♙xa7 e4 20...♙xd3 21.♙xd3 ♖xd3 22.♖xd3 ♖xd3 is playable as if: 23.♖ad1 (23.♙c5 ♗d2 24.♖ad1 ♖c2 25.♖c1 ♗d2 26.♖d1) 23...♖xd1 24.♖xd1 ♖a8 wins a piece.

21.d4 After 21.dxe4 ♖xd1 22.♖fxd1 ♙xe2 23.♖xd8 ♖xd8 24.exf5 ♖a8 25.♙d4 ♖xa4 26.♙xf6 gxf6 27.f3 ♙d3 28.g4 ♙c4 29.a3 ♙d5 Black is better.

21...♙xe2 22.♖xe2 h5



Black plays for a kingside attack despite being two pawns down he has good practical chances.

23.♙c5 If 23.h3 e3 24.♙g1 ♗e4 25.fxe3 ♗fg3 26.♖d3 ♗xf1 27.♖xf1 Black is slightly better.

23...♖f4 24.♗b6 ♖h4 25.♙g1 ♖e6

26.♗c4 26.f3 ♖de8 27.♖f2 exf3 28.♖xh4 ♗xh4 is worth consideration.

26...♗d5 Aiming for f4.

27.g3 27.♗e3 ♗f4 28.♖e1 ♖g5 looks good for Black.

27...♖h3 28.♙h1 28.f4 must be played, eg 28...♖g6 29.♖g2 ♖xg2+ 30.♙xg2 ♗fe3+ 31.♗xe3 ♗xe3+ 32.♙f2 ♗xf1 33.♖xf1 with an equal position; the white pawns compensate for the exchange.

28...h4 29.♖g1 ♖h6 30.♖f1 Allowing a neat finish: 30.g4 ♗f4 31.♖xe4 ♗g3+ 32.fxg3 hxg3 33.♖g2 ♖xh2+ 34.♖xh2 ♖xh2+ 35.♙g1 ♗h3+ 36.♙f1 ♖f2+ 37.♙e1 g2 38.♖xg2 ♖e8+ 39.♗e5 ♖xg2 40.♗d1 f6 is winning for Black.

30...♖xh2+ After the white king captures the discovered double check leads to mate.

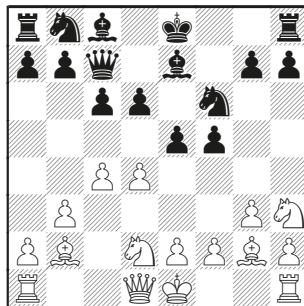
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Simon Williams's last-round win against Alan Merry was a tactical affair.

Alan B Merry – Simon Williams

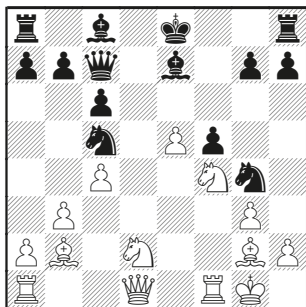
Hastings Masters 2019-20 Hastings ENG (9.6)

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.g3 ♗f6 4.♙g2 c6 5.♗h3 ♙e7 6.b3 d6 7.♙b2 ♖c7 8.♗d2 e5



Black has played slowly in the opening to complete with ...e5.

9.dxe5 dxe5 10.e4 ♖a6 11.0-0 ♜c5 12.f4 exf4 13.e5 ♜g4 14.♜xf4



White is ahead in development and Black must be careful.

14...♜e6 Not **14...♜e3** **15.♞h5+**; or **14...♜xe5** **15.♞h5+**, in both cases White is much better.

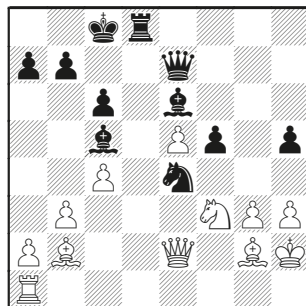
15.♞h1 ♜xf4 16.♞xf4 ♜e6 Black prepares to castle queenside and relies on a tactical device to keep his knight on g4.

17.♞e2 0-0-0 18.h3 h5 18...g5 is also possible.
19.♜f3 If White captures the knight on g4 with **19.hxg4 hxg4+ 20.♞g1 ♜c5+ 21.♞f2 ♞a5 22.♜f1 f4 23.gxf4 g3 24.♜xg3 ♞d2** wins.

19...g5 20.♞d4 ♜c5 21.♜xg5 ♞e7 22.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 23.♜f3

After **23.♜xe6 ♞xe6 24.hxg4 hxg4 25.♜e4 ♞h8+ 26.♞g2 ♞h2+ 27.♞xh2 ♞h6+ 28.♞g2 ♞h3#**.

23...♜f2+ 24.♞h2 ♜e4



The black knight emerges on the very strong square e4 attacking g3 which leads to White's downfall.

25.♞d1 ♞xd1 26.♞xd1 ♞g7 27.♜d4 ♞xg3+ 28.♞g1 ♜f2 29.♞d2 ♜xh3+ 30.♞f1 ♜e7 31.♜xa7 c5 32.♜b6 ♜f4 33.♞f2 ♞g4 34.♜e1 ♜xg2 35.♜xg2 h4 36.♜f4 h3 37.♜e2 37.♜a5 is essential: now Black wins.

37...f4 38.♜xc5 ♜h4 39.♞g1 ♞f3+ 40.♜f2 ♜g4

0-1

HASTINGS MASTERS 2019-20 - LEADING FINAL ROUND 9 STANDINGS:

Rk.	Sno	Name	FED	Rtg	Pts	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	10	Panchanathan Magesh Chandran	IND	2479	7.5	0.0	6	52.5
2	2	Edouard Romain	FRA	2653	7.0	0.0	5	53.5
3	5	Kantor Gergely	HUN	2541	6.5	0.0	5	51.0
4	13	Williams Simon K	ENG	2461	6.5	0.0	5	47.5
5	12	Bagi Mate	HUN	2469	6.5	0.0	4	54.0
6	6	Stany G.A.	IND	2526	6.5	0.0	4	50.5
7	1	Howell David W L	ENG	2676	6.0	0.0	5	53.0
8	16	Fishbein Alexander	USA	2435	6.0	0.0	5	49.5
9	17	Hebden Mark L	ENG	2435	6.0	0.0	5	48.0
10	23	Vaishali R	IND	2433	6.0	0.0	5	43.5

**YOU MAY NO LONGER BE ABLE TO READ RAY KEENE
IN THE TIMES AND THE SPECTATOR, BUT YOU CAN
NOW FOLLOW HIS WRITING WEEKLY IN THE ARTICLE
(THEARTICLE.COM) AND IN THE BCM.**

COPY THE ENEMY:

**Adopt a system which
you have faced yourself and
which has caused you difficulties**

By GM Ray Keene OBE

In recent months I have been advocating a method of improving your results, by adopting a hero or role model and using that player's ideas to create your own repertoire and prepared strategies.

An example from my own practice was the opening of the following game, where my opponent was the Soviet Grandmaster, soon to become Garry Kasparov's second in his world championship matches v Karpov.

**Iossif Davidovich Dorfman -
Raymond Keene [E80]**

Manila Manila PHI, 06.1979

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♘g7
4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0** After these moves Dorfman tried the relatively unusual:

6.♘g5 Whereupon I steered the game into well-established Modern Benoni contours with:

**6...h6 7.♘e3 c5 8.d5 e6 9.♖d2 exd5 10.cxd5
♘h7 11.♗ge2 ♗bd7 12.♗g3 a6 13.a4 ♗e5
14.♘e2 ♘d7 15.0-0 ♖b8 16.h3 b5 17.f4 ♗c4**

It seemed that I had played all the right Modern Benoni moves, but after **18.♘xc4 bxc4 19.e5** White was winning and I only escaped by a miracle.

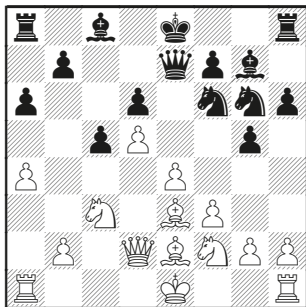
It therefore seemed to me that if Dorfman could gain such a crushing advantage so quickly against natural play by Black, then it was worth trying ♘g5 myself. I did so and the results were spectacular.

Here are two examples:

Raymond Keene - D Brett Lund [A65]

London ENG, 05.02.1982

**1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♗c3 exd5
5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.♘g5 h6 8.♘e3 a6 9.a4
♖e7 10.f3 ♘g7 11.♖d2 ♗bd7 12.♗h3
♗e5 13.♗f2 g5 14.♘e2 ♗g6**

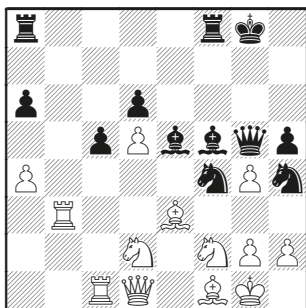


In the USSR Championship the previous year, Gulko v Kasparov had gone 1 4 ... ♕d7 15 a5 ♖b8 16 ♖a4 ♘h5 17. ♘b6 ♖b5 18.0-0 0-0 19 b4! +/- (1-0, 37). Lund tries to improve Black's play.

15.0-0 0-0 16.♖ab1 ♘h5 17.b4 b6 18.bxc5 bxc5 19.♖b6 White's control of the open bfile gives him a strategic win on the queenside. Black is therefore forced to hurl all his resources into a do-or-die attack on the other wing.

19...♘hf4 20.♖c1 ♖e5 21.♖f1 The first move in a chain of retreats which, paradoxically, leave Black in dire straits.

21...♘h4 22.♖d1 ♖f6 23.♘b1 h5 24.♘d2 g4 25.fxg4 ♖g5 26.♖b3 f5 27.exf5 ♖xf5



Black's attack appears to be on the point of crashing through but White has so many pieces defending his king that he can expose all such aggression as futile.

28.gxf5 ♘hxg2 29.♖xf4 ♘xf4+ 30.♖g3 ♘e2+ A counsel of despair. In order to save his queen Black has to give up his last few attacking units.

31.♖xe2 ♖xg3 32.hxg3 ♖xg3+ 33.♖g2 ♖xf5 34.♖e6+ ♖f7 35.♘de4 ♖f4 36.♖f1 ♖f5 37.♘xd6 ♖xe6 38.dxe6 ♖g7 39.♘f5 ♖g5

1-0

Raymond Keene - Bo Jacobsen [E80]

Lux Time Cup Aarhus DEN (6), 08.05.1983

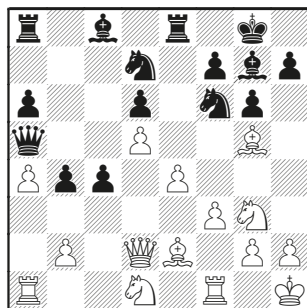
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♖g7 4.e4 0-0 5.f3 d6 6.♖g5 c5 7.d5 e6 8.♖d2 exd5 9.cxd5 ♖e8 If 9 ... h6!? then 10.♖e3! (10.♖xh6 ♘xe4! 11.♘xe4 ♖h4+ gives Black good chances). Play could then develop along the lines of my game with Dorfman.

10.♘ge2 ♖a5 Or 10 ... a6 11.a4 ♖a5 12.♖a3!.

11.♘g3 I can play for a4 or b4, since Black hasn't yet played ...a6, setting up the ...b5 break. My strategy was to aim at Black's weaknesses on the queenside pawns that would come to b5 and c5.

11...a6 12.♖e2 b5 13.0-0 ♘bd7 14.a4 Better perhaps was 14.♘hl c4 15.a3.

14...b4 15.♘d1 c4 16.♘h1



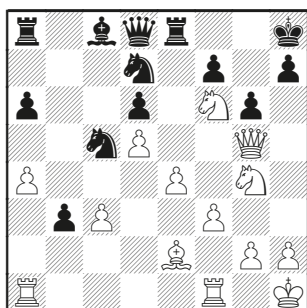
I decided to avoid 16.♖xc4 ♖c5+ 17.♘e3 h6 18.♖xf6 ♖xf6 19.♖adl ♘b6 20.♖b3 ♖d7. Whether as White or Black in the King's Indian I hated giving up my dark-squared bishop if my opponent retained his one.

16...♖b6 17.♙e3 ♘fd7 18.♙d4 ♘c5?
Black should play 18...♙xd4 19.♗xd4
♗c5, and if 20.♗xc5 (20.♗d2!) then 20
... ♘xc5 21 a5 (or 21.♘e3 ♘b3 22.♗ad1
♘xa4 23.♘xc4 ♗d8) 21... ♘b3 22.♗a2
♘cl 23.♗al ♘xe2 24.♘xe2 ♘xd5!.

19.♙xg7 ♖xg7 20.♗g5 Better than
20.♗d4+ f6! 21.♙xc4 ♘xc4 22.♗xc4
♙d7 23.♘e3 ♗ac8.

20...♙g8 21.♘e3 c3 22.bxc3 b3 23.♘h5
♘bd7 24.♘g4 ♗d8 If 24...♗xc3 then
25.e5! dxe5 26.♘hf6+ ♘xf6 27.♘xf6+
♙f8 28.♘xe8 ♙xe8 29.d6.

25.♘hf6+ ♙h8



26.h4! 26...♗b8 Or 26 ... ♘xf6 (26 ... ♗f8
27.♗h6!) 27.♘xf6 ♗e5 (if 27...♗f8 or
27...♗e7, then 28.♗h6! anyway) 28.♗h6
♗xf6 29.♗f8 mate.

27.♘xe8 ♗xe8 28.♗d2 ♗e7 29.♗d4+
f6 30.♘e3 ♙g8 31.♗fb1 ♘e5 32.f4
♘f7 33.♙f3 f5 34.e5 ♗xh4+ 35.♙g1
b2 36.♗a2 ♘b3 37.♗a7 ♘d2 37...♗b7
38.♗a8 ♗c7 39.♗axb2; or 37...♗xf4
38.♘f1 ♗b7 39.♗a8 ♗c7 40.♗axb2 ♘c5
41.♗b8,

38.♗xb8 ♗g3 39.♗xc8+ ♙g7 40.♗axb2
♘xf3+ 41.♙f1

1-0

So good luck copying your opponents' most dangerous ideas!

HOW HAS THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK AFFECTED CHESS

DELAYS, CANCELLATIONS AND CONCERNS

By Mllan Dinic

The Coronavirus which appeared in China in December 2019 and which has led to a global health-panic has also affected chess events. As reported by Chess.com on 10th February, the virus outbreak has affected the preparation of the two Chinese participants of the Candidates tournament GM Ding Liren and GM Wang Hao. Also, across South East Asia chess events had to be delayed due to the virus.

The coronavirus outbreak, which started in Wuhan, the capital of the Chinese Hubei province, has spread thought the country and South East Asia, with cases recorded across the world. While the Chinese authorities, the World Health Organisation and other countries are taking measures to contain the spread of the virus and find a cure, experts believe it will be some time before the situation is resolved. A number of large public gatherings have either been banned or postponed, mainly in China but also in other countries (recently the Barcelona-based global tech Mobile World Congress has been cancelled because of the concerns around coronavirus; Cisco Live, due to take place in

The coronavirus outbreak, which started in Wuhan, the capital of the Chinese Hubei province, has spread throughout the country and South East Asia, with cases recorded across the world

Melbourne at the beginning of March, has also been cancelled; Swatch cancelled its big watch event in Zurich; and the Kingpins denim trade fair in Hong Kong has also been called off). This begs the question - what about chess?

All chess events in China have been cancelled or delayed as the country is struggling to cope with the virus outbreak. Chess federations across SE Asia are taking precautionary measures and monitoring the situation, the BCM understands. A picture which took place earlier in February shows many

As Chess.com reported, the coronavirus outbreak affected both Chinese participants of the upcoming Candidates tournament. Both Ding Liren and Wang Hao said they had to cancel their preparation plans for the event

from a children's tournament in Vietnam players wearing masks during the games.

Chinese GM Wei Yi has had to pull out of the Prague Masters just days before it was due to start given the flight cancellations from China. Top events across the world are likely to face disruption as well.

As Chess.com reported, the coronavirus outbreak affected both Chinese participants of the upcoming Candidates tournament. Both Ding Liren and Wang Hao said they had to cancel their preparation plans for the event. Ding Liren is currently in China in Wenzhou (a city 700km southeast of Wuhan). Wenzhou is in the Zhejiang province where - by the time of writing this article, 16th February - there have been 1167 confirmed cases of the virus, with zero deaths and 456 people recovering. Ding Liren said he is working with his team online.

Wang Hao is currently in Japan. He was due to fly back to Beijing where he was supposed to have a training camp with his team, but this has now been cancelled. He told Chess.

Playing under the masks - a recent tournament in Vietnam



com that he plans to stay in Tokyo until the end of February. He plans to briefly return to Beijing before going to the Candidates.

FIDE, the world chess body, has said it is monitoring the situation. On its Twitter feed, FIDE has confirmed it had contacted the Chinese players asking them if they have a valid Russian visa (since the outbreak of the virus Russia has suspended visa-free travel from China) and enquiring about their health. Albert Stepanyan, the organizer of the Candidates Tournament in Yekaterinburg, denied that the Chinese players have been asked to arrive in Russia 14 days in advance and stay in quarantine, Chess.com has reported. “We will apply recommendations of the Russian state and FIDE, and, currently, there is no quarantine recommendation issued”, Stepanyan said. Wang Hao said it would be “totally unfair” if he were asked to come to Russia 14 days ahead of the event, adding that he would not comply with such a request. Both Wang Hao and Ding Liren said they plan to arrive in Yekaterinburg a few days before the event.



Yekaterinburg: the venue for the upcoming Candidates match

So far there is at least one Chinese person in quarantine in Yekaterinburg: The Russian news agency Interfax reported on 10th February that Russian authorities have quarantined a Chinese diplomat in that city as a safety precaution against the coronavirus outbreak. Consul General Cui Shaochun arrived in Yekaterinburg on 6th February, to take up his new post, but was told to stay at home for two weeks, the Russian Foreign Ministry has confirmed. Russia has so far reported two cases of the coronavirus and has isolated hundreds of Russian and Chinese nationals who have recently arrived from China to screen them for the virus.

The biggest focus for the chess world is now on the 2020 Candidates tournament which is due to take place from the 15th March to 5th April in Yekaterinburg (Russia) which is 1500km east of Moscow. The preparations for the Candidates tournament seem to be going according to plans: The drawing of lots took place in Moscow on 15th February and pairings have been announced.

There are, however, other big events, bringing together crowds of people, due to take place in Asia - the Asian Amateur Chess Championship which is due to start in Oman in April as well as the Sharjah Masters in UAE and the Tashkent Open in Uzbekistan. Only time will tell what will happen. While authorities across the world are trying to contain the virus, the economists have started calculating consequences on the world economy. The impact is likely to be felt in the chess world as well - not just because of the immediate health threat but, also, in terms of sponsorship.

So far there is at least one Chinese person in quarantine in Yekaterinburg: The Russian news agency Interfax reported on 10th February that Russian authorities have quarantined a Chinese diplomat in that city as a safety precaution against the coronavirus outbreak

WIJK AAN ZEE 2020 EDITION: THE WIMBLEDON OF CHESS



CARUANA'S DOMINANCE, THE YOUNGSTERS' PROMINENCE AND CARLSEN'S UNBEATEN RECORD

By GM Aleksandar Colovic

Photo: Wijk aan Zee Official / social media

There were three main stories in this year's Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee (11-26 January): Caruana's dominance, the youngsters' prominence and Carlsen's unbeaten record and second place.

Starting with the World Champion we must say that we have been spoilt by his constant successes and when he doesn't win it is always taken as a surprise. With eight out of 13, three wins and 10 draws and a loss of 10 rating points this must be seen as a disappointment for him. He started with seven straight draws, some of them quite lucky. Then he won three games in a row and it seemed as if it was the beginning of a series of wins that would see him run away with the tournament once more. But then came the rest day and his rhythm was broken and he finished with three uneventful draws.

Still, there is one thing that Carlsen can be proud of - he managed to reach 120 games at classical time-control without a loss, which is an absolute record. Only

Carlsen started with seven straight draws, some of them quite lucky. Then he won three games in a row and it seemed as if it was the beginning of a series of wins that would see him run away with the tournament once more. But then came the rest day and his rhythm was broken and he finished with three uneventful draws



TATA STEEL CHESS TOURNAMENT 2020

two of these games were played against non-élite opposition and his last loss was as long ago as 31st July 2018, against Mamedyarov. Records are made to be broken, but to break this one (and the number may even climb higher still!) will be extremely difficult.

There were two young players that set Wijk on fire this year - the 16-year-old Alireza Firouzja and 20-year old Jorden van Foreest. The former was perhaps anticipated, with the built-up expectations after he finished second at the World Rapid last December in Moscow. It was the latter that was the main surprise of the tournament.

With exceptional opening preparation, including some draw-oriented lines like the Alapin Sicilian and the Four Knights Scotch, the Dutchman was able to take

advantage of his pre-tournament role as an outsider and score wins when his opponents blundered, as Vitiugov did as early as move 10 in the French Defence. At times he was too respectful of his opponents, as when he took a draw in a clearly better endgame against Caruana, after surviving a losing position, but his ability to keep his feet on the ground and retain a plus score for the whole duration of the tournament, finishing on +1 (7 out of 13, sharing 4th place with Dubov), speaks volumes for his potential for growth.

That potential was never in doubt with Firouzja. He started with 2.5 out of 3 and 3.5 out of 5, becoming the early leader of the tournament. His game against Anish Giri was the one he considered his best.

There were two young players who set Wijk on fire this year – the 16-year-old Alireza Firouzja and 20-year-old Jorden van Foreest

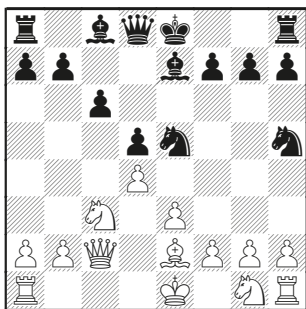
Alireza Firouzja – Anish Giri

82nd Tata Steel GpA Wijk aan Zee NED (5.5)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♕e7 Giri has a very wide repertoire and can play pretty much anything. But on the eve of the Candidates he must have had a plan of how to manage his openings in Wijk - something was tested, something was obfuscated, something was used as a false trail. If only we could tell which was which.

4.cxd5 exd5 5.♙f4 c6 6.♖c2 ♘f6 7.e3 ♗h5 This interesting idea was introduced at the highest level by Aronian at the Kazan Candidates matches in 2011. By harassing the bishop on f4 Black prevents the perfect set-up of ♕d3 and ♗ge2.

8.♕e5 ♘d7 9.♕e2 ♖xe5!



The point of Black's play. Returning with the knight to f6 would achieve nothing as White would put the bishop back on g3.

10.dxe5 g6 11.♕xh5 gxh5 Black has ruined his kingside structure but obtained the bishop pair and dynamic possibilities, based on opening the game by ...f6. The position is double-edged as White can advance in the centre and will have the safer king.

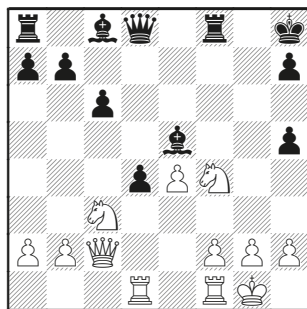
12.♗ge2 In the Candidates match in 2011 Grischuk played 12 0-0-0 here, but lost the rapid game to Aronian (though he went on to win the match).



12...f6 13.exf6 ♕xf6 14.♖d1 0-0 15.0-0 ♖h8 16.e4 White must play in the centre as he attempts to become active before Black finishes his development.

16.♗f4 is an attempt to play with pieces only, but after **16...h4 17.h3 ♕e5 18.♗ce2 ♖f6** White's play has no prospects while Black can continue with **...♕f5, ...♖g8** etc.

16...d4 17.♗f4 ♕e5?



A dubious manoeuvre; the knight on f4 didn't have many squares to go to other than d3 and Black is wasting a move to force it there.

After **17...♖e8** the engine gives Black a considerable advantage, but this is



one of those positions where the human evaluation differs. The reasons for the engine's evaluation are the bishop pair and the passed d4-pawn. Perhaps an engine can nurture these advantages to something more tangible. But for a human, the safer king and the possibility of hopping around with the knights creating threats make White's position easier to play and therefore an 'unclear' assessment is closer to the truth. 18.♖ce2 b6 19.b4 preventing ...c5 for now. 19... h4 20.♖fe1 ♕a6 21.♗d3 ♖d8 Black is controlling a lot of squares and this makes it difficult for the knights to find good spots. 22.♗ef4 ♕g5 23.♗h3 ♕h6 24.f4!?. An interesting pawn sacrifice is 24...♕xd3 25.♖xd3 ♕xf4 26.♗xf4 ♖xf4 27.e5, with some compensation in view of the weaker black king.

18.♗d3 ♕g7 19.♗e2 Now White is well-positioned to start pushing his central pawns. If this is compared to the position analysed in the note to Black's 17th move we see that Black has wasted time while White has successfully rearranged his pieces.

19...h4 20.h3 ♖e7 21.e5 ♖d8 After 21...♕xe5?! 22.♗xe5 ♖xe5 23.♖xd4 Black

doesn't have the bishop pair any more and his king and h4-pawn are weak.

22.f4 This defends the e5-pawn safely, shutting the bishop on g7, but it takes away the f4-square from the knights.

22.♗ef4 is the engine's suggestion, to play with pieces and concentrate the support on the e5-pawn. 22...♕f5 23.♖fe1 ♕h6 24.♖e2 ♖f8 25.e6 ♖ae8 26.♖h5 ♖f6 is indeed a position that is difficult to evaluate as both sides have their trumps.

22...♕f5 23.♖h2 With the idea of re-routing the knight from e2 to f3 via g1. An additional idea is to push g4 so the king defends the h3-pawn in advance.

23...♖e6 24.♗g1 ♕h6 25.♗f3 ♖e7 Both sides have maximised the potential of their pieces and with his last move Black defends the h4-pawn and attacks the one on f4.

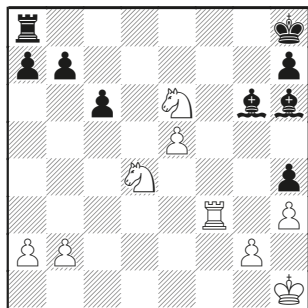
26.♖h1 ♕xf4 27.♖c5 ♖xc5 28.♗xc5 White's pawn sacrifice was temporary, as now both the h4 and d4 pawns are hanging.

28...♕c2 The bishops on the f-file are vulnerable and Giri evacuates them with tempo.

29.♖xd4 ♖xd4 30.♗xd4 ♕e3 31.♗ce6 31.♗xc2 ♕xc5 leads to an equal endgame - the bishop is more active in an open position, but the passed e-pawn and the weak pawn on h4 compensate for that.

31...♕g6 32.♖f3 32.♗f5 was an alternative, but again as on the previous move Firouzja wants to keep things more complex. 32...♕xf5 (32...♖e8 33.♗xe3 ♖xe6 34.♗f5 ♖xe5 35.♗xh4 is an equal endgame.) 33.♖xf5 ♖e8 34.♗g5 ♖g8 35.♗f3 ♕f2 36.♖h5 c5 37.♗xh4 ♕d4 hitting b2 and e5 and again the endgame is balanced.

32...♕h6

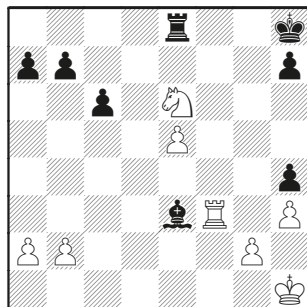


32...♙c1! is the engine's suggestion and it is the more ambitious choice for Black. Note how Firouzja already on two occasions, moves 31 and 32, chose the more ambitious moves while Giri, when he had the chance, chose the less ambitious one. Eventually this tendency to go for simplicity and avoid the toughest choices led to complacency and loss of the game. 33.♖b3 ♖b8!? a curious attempt (*The simple 33...b6 34.♘xc6 ♙f7 35.♘cd8 ♙xd8 36.♘xd8 ♙xb3 37.♗xb3 ♙g7 38.g4! ♙xb2 39.♘c6 is equal as White's king comes to the centre and all his pawns are on light squares.*) 34.♘xc6 ♖e8 35.♘cd8 b6 Black sacrificed a pawn in order to have the knights immobilised. White can still keep the balance, but he must be careful. 36.♖b4 ♙g8 37.a4: White cannot afford to lose the b2-pawn, giving Black a queenside majority and the bishop from b2 would attack the e5-pawn. 37...h5 (37...♙f5 allows 38.♘d4 and the knights manage to untangle) 38.a5 (38.♙g1? ♙f5 drops material as 39.♘d4 runs into 39...♙e3+ 40.♙h2 a5 41.♖c4 ♙d3, winning a piece after 42.♖c3 ♙xd4 43.♙xd3 ♙xd8) 38...bxa5 39.♖b7 with dynamic balance on the board.

33.♘f5 ♙xf5 34.♖xf5 ♙e3 The idea is to prevent the ♘d4-f3 manoeuvre, but there was no need for that.

34...♖e8 was perfectly fine for Black. 35.♘d4 ♙e3 36.♘f3 ♙g8 with equality as both kings are cut off from the centre.

35.♖f3 ♖e8?



A concession by Giri as in the rook endgame Black is obviously the defending side, while with the light pieces on the board Black didn't have to worry. Giri was probably under the impression that he was the one defending, most likely because of Firouzja's ambitious and aggressive choices early on. This shows that being more aggressive than your opponent gives the player a psychological (if not real) initiative. Curiously, Giri suffered from the same outward ambition in his lost match at the World Cup against Jeffery Xiong (see the November issue of 2019 for the detailed analysis).

35...♙h6 36.♖f7 ♖e8 was still equal; 35...♙b6 again with the idea of ...♖e8 was also fine.

36.♖xe3 ♖xe6 37.♙g1 ♙g7 38.♙f2 ♙g6 39.♖e4 ♖e7? Preparing ...♙f5, but this doesn't suffice as the pawn endgame Giri voluntarily went for is lost.

The immediate 39...♙f5 drops a pawn after 40.♖xh4 as the h7-pawn is hanging. With the game move Giri defends the h7-pawn in advance.; 39...h5! still keeps the balance. After 40.♙f3 ♙g5 White cannot easily make progress.

40.♙f3 The threat is either ♙g4 or ♙f4.

40...♙f5 41.♖xh4 ♙xe5 There is already no return, but the endgame is lost for Black.

42.♖e4+ ♜f6 43.♖xe7 ♜xe7 44.♜f4 ♜f6
45.g4 a5 After 45...c5 the same move wins:
46.a4! b6 47.h4 a6 48.♜e4 ♜e6 49.g5 and
eventually the white king will harvest all
Black's queenside pawns.

46.a4! The only move to win! It fixes
Black's queenside and the plan now is to
sacrifice the kingside passed pawn that
will be created in order to penetrate the
queenside with the king.

46...h6 47.h4 ♜e6 48.g5 hxg5+ 49.♜xg5
49.hxg5?? would be a huge mistake as the
g-pawn is too close: 49...b5 50.g6 ♜f6
51.g7 ♜xg7 52.♜e5 bxa4 53.♜d6 ♜f6
54.♜xc6 ♜e6 55.♜b5 ♜d5 56.♜xa4 ♜c4
and the black king makes it in time.

49...♜f7 50.♜f5 b5 51.♜e5

1-0

Firouzja's tournament came to an abrupt
halt as he faced the Big Three in consecutive
rounds: Carlsen, Caruana and Anand. He
lost all three games, being outplayed in all
of them. The game with Carlsen was typical
of the gap that exists between them.

Alireza Firouzja – Magnus Carlsen

82nd Tata Steel GpA Wijk aan Zee NED (9.1)

1.e4 e5 In the second half of the tournament
Carlsen played only 1...e5 against 1. e4. In this
game he was almost in a must-win situation
as he was trailing Firouzja by half a point, yet
he still chose not to play the Sicilian.

2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♘b5 ♗f6 Another curious
moment, showing that Carlsen is a fantastic
connoisseur of his opponents' psychology.
White has quite a few super-safe choices against
the Berlin, but Carlsen correctly predicted that
his opponent will play 4.d3, which allows for
complex middlegame positions.

4.d3 d6 Carlsen is playing for a win! The more
popular 4...♘c5 is well-explored and White



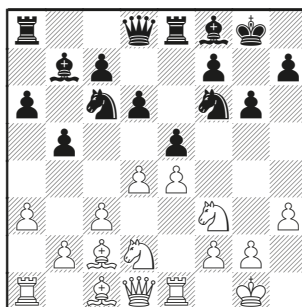
The clash between the current and the
future(?) World champion: Magnus
Carlsen vs Alireza Firouzja

can steer the game in any direction he chooses.
Now Carlsen gets the complex Spanish
middlegame he was hoping for and the rest of
the game shows the correctness of his choice.

5.c3 a6 6.♘a4 ♘e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♞e1 ♞e8
9.♞bd2 ♞f8 10.h3 b5 11.♘c2 ♘b7 Carlsen
opts for the development that is typical for the
Zaitsev Variation since with the white bishop
on c2 the move ...♞a5 makes less sense.

12.d4 Transposing to the Zaitsev. White
played d4 in two moves (d3-d4) but saved
on the bishop retreat to c2 (♘a4-c2 instead
of ♘a4-b3-c2 as in the normal Spanish).

12...g6 13.a3?!



A somewhat strange choice, especially considering White's next. This uncertainty when it comes to the choice of lines shows that Firouzja wasn't expecting this transposition, thus making Carlsen's opening 'trickery' a full success.

13.d5 is by far the main move here.

13...♘b8 14.d5?! With a3 played it made more sense to continue with 14.b4 as, if White wanted to play d5, it was much better to do so on the previous move as the move a3 doesn't really help with the closed centre while Black inevitably would have played the same ...♘b8-d7 manoeuvre.

14...c6 Black immediately attacks White's centre.

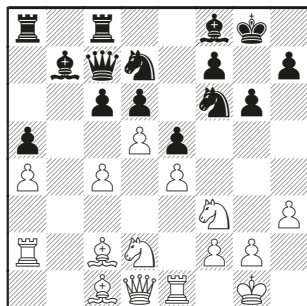
15.c4 An attempt to keep the centre.

15.dxc6 ♗xc6 16.♖f1 ♘bd7 17.♘g3 ♔c7 is very comfortable for Black, who in fact has a great version of the Najdorf Sicilian structure!

15...♘bd7 16.a4 Further proof that 13 a3 was a waste of time.

16...♔c7 17.b3 ♖ec8 Black has a harmonious position and calmly prepares for the opening of the play on the queenside.

18.♖a2 bxc4 19.bxc4 a5!



Of course, this not only doesn't allow a5 from White, but it also liberates a6 for the bishop.

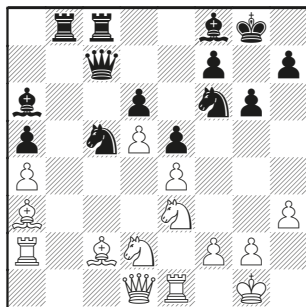
20.♘f1?! The knight won't be effective from e3.

20.♘b1! was a difficult move to make. White anticipates the exchange on d5 and starts the knight on the journey to a3 from where it would control the b5-square. 20...♗a6 21.♘a3 cxd5 22.cxd5 ♖ab8 23.♗e3 keeps White fighting on the queenside.

20...♗a6 Black develops his queenside initiative with natural moves, improving the position of his pieces.

21.♘e3 ♘c5 22.♘d2 cxd5 23.cxd5 ♖ab8 With natural moves Black has established control on the queenside. He controls both open files and his pieces put pressure on e4 and d3.

24.♗a3



24...♔d8! A characteristic moment. Black has initiative on the queenside, but White is defending there. So Carlsen uses the principles of two weaknesses and starts to improve his position on the kingside, aiming to create something on that side of the board too.

25.♔f3 h5 26.♖a1 White wants to oppose the rooks on the b-file to ease some of the pressure.

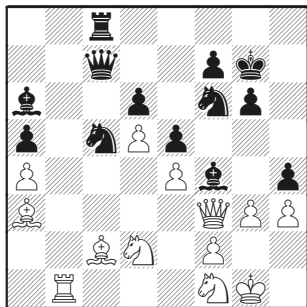
The immediate 26.♖b1 was possible, though after 26...♖xb1+ 27.♘xb1 ♘d3 28.♗xd3 ♗xd3 29.♘d2 ♗h6 Black is clearly better with the pair of bishops and continuous initiative.

26...♙h6 27.♖ab1 ♜xb1 28.♜xb1 ♔g7 White won over the b-file, but there is nothing for him to do there, while Black in the meantime has improved his position on the kingside by activating his dark-squared bishop and threatening the positional ...h4, fixing White's light squares.

29.♘f1 It is difficult to suggest something for White, but his next 3 moves are just doing nothing, moving the knight from e3 to f1 and back. This illustrates the difficulty of White's position and shows Carlsen's ability to subdue a strong opponent with Black in less than 30 moves.

29.g3 wouldn't have stopped 29...h4! as 30.gxh4 ♙f4 is pretty awful for White, who now has to worry about weaknesses on both sides of the board.

29...h4 30.♘e3 ♙f4 31.♘f1 ♚c7 32.g3



Finally deciding to do something, though it further weakens White's position.

32.♘e3 was undoubtedly possible, though Black can continue to improve his position by ...♘h7-g5. 32...♘h7 33.♙b2 ♘g8 not blundering away the bishop on f4 with ...♘g5 to come next.

32...hxg3 33.fxg3 ♙h6 34.h4 ♚d7 Eyeing both a4 and h3.

35.♔g2 ♘xa4 It's time to convert.

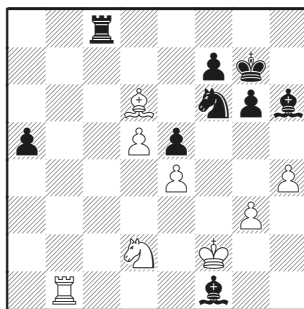
36.♙xa4 ♚xa4 37.♙xd6 ♚d4 White's position is falling apart. The bishops on a6



Vladislav Artemiev with
TataSteel tournament director
Jeroen van den Berg (right)

and h6, like a pair of scissors, cut through White's position.

38.♚f2 ♚xf2+ 39.♔xf2 ♙xf1



White resigned here, as he had probably been expecting to lose for quite some time now.

However, after 39...♙xf1 White had an unexpected resource after 40.♙xe5! with the idea either of taking on f1 or playing ♖b6. Still after 40...♙xd2 (40...♙h3 is also good.) 41.♙xf1 ♙c3 42.♖c1 ♙xe5 43.♖xc8 ♙xc3 Black should still win relatively easily.

0-1

ALIREZA FIROUZJA'S FLAG

Owing to his decision not to follow his Iranian government's orders not to play in Moscow at the World Rapid and Blitz, in Wijk, just as in Moscow, Firouzja played under the FIDE flag. Being without federation makes him a very tempting 'signing' for the powerful countries in the chess world. At the moment France and USA are attempting to get him to play for them. Whichever one he chooses, it is clear that with strong support he will have all that is required to reach the very top.

WHY IS CARUANA'S VICTORY SO IMPRESSIVE?

Caruana's win in Wijk was his first. While it took him a while to win the main event (when Carlsen won his first Wijk in 2008 Caruana won the C-tournament), the result he scored immediately puts him among the best ever- only Kasparov in 1999 and Carlsen in 2013 had the same score of 10 out of 13. But Caruana's winning margin of 2 points over second-placed Carlsen and his tournament performance of 2945 make his result better than those of his predecessors. This victory can only be compared, though it comes second, to his win in Saint Louis in 2014 when he won his first seven games and scored 8.5 out of 10 with a tournament performance of 3103 and a 3-point margin ahead of Carlsen in second place.

All tournament wins have a turning-point, where one can exactly pinpoint from which moment things started to go exceptionally well for the winner. For Caruana it was the Round 8 game against Anand.

Fabiano Caruana – Viswanathan Anand

82nd Tata Steel GpA Wijk aan Zee NED (8.6)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♙b4
The Ragozin is one of the most reliable openings nowadays and is a regular feature in Anand's repertoire.



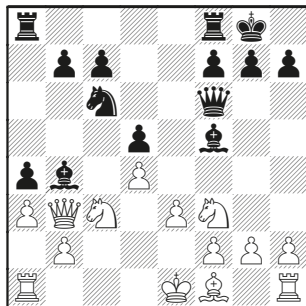
Firouzja started with 2.5 out of 3 and 3.5 out of 5, becoming the early leader of the tournament

5.cxd5 exd5 6.♙f4 A rare option compared to the more popular 6 ♙g5 and 6 ♖a4.

6...0-0 6...♘e4 is a more aggressive option that led to a quick success after 7.♖a4+?! ♘c6 8.♞c1 0-0 9.g3 g5 10.♙e3 f5 in the game 0-1 (21) Svidler,P (2768)-Mamedyarov,S (2804) Wijk aan Zee NED 2018.

7.e3 ♙f5 8.♖b3 ♘c6 9.♙g5 a5 10.♙xf6 ♖xf6 11.a3 Taking on d5 is too dangerous as after ...♞fd8 Black would have tremendous initiative.

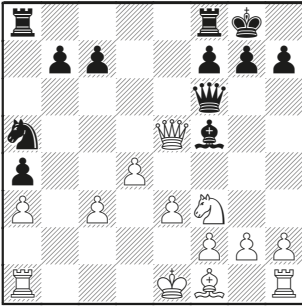
11...a4!?



Inviting complications.

11...♙xc3+ was a calmer alternative. 12.bxc3 ♘e7 is fine for Black, as taking on b7 leads to a repetition after 13.♖xb7 ♜fb8 14.♗xc7 ♜c8 15.♗e5 (15.♗b7 ♜cb8 is an immediate repetition.) 15...♗b6 16.♗xe7 ♗b2: this looks dangerous for White, but luckily Black can only force a perpetual check after 17.♞d1 ♗xc3+ 18.♞d2 ♗c1+ 19.♞d1 ♗c3+

12.♖xd5 ♙xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♘a5 14.♗e5



A natural move, getting away from d5 with a tempo and still eyeing the bishop on f5. Already here Caruana had in mind the ensuing exchange sacrifice.

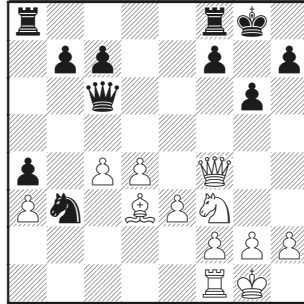
14.♗a2 is the engine's preference. Still after 14...c5 15.♙e2 ♜fc8 16.♗b2 b5!? Black has compensation in view of his active play on the queenside.

14...♗c6 15.c4 ♘b3 16.♗xf5 Here it is, quite a promising exchange sacrifice. White gets to finish development and will obtain attacking chances on the kingside.

16.♞a2?! ♙e4 is unpleasant for White, especially after 17.♙e2 ♘c1!

Caruana's win in Wijk was his first. His result immediately puts him among the best ever – only Kasparov in 1999 and Carlsen in 2013 had the same score of 10 out of 13

16...♘xa1 17.♙d3 g6 18.♗f4 ♘b3 19.0-0

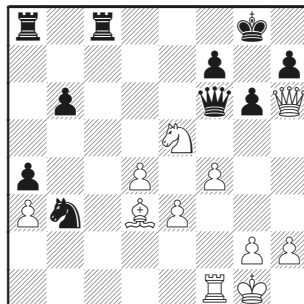


White has a pawn for the exchange with a very compact position and central control with chances to attack the black king (with ideas ♗h6 and ♘g5, plus the advance of the pawns). All these factors give White good compensation for the exchange.

19...♗d6 20.♗h6 ♗f6 21.c5 The black queen on f6 successfully defends against the mating threat of ♘g5 as she can retreat to g7, so White liberates the c4-square for the bishop and intends to change the direction of his attack - instead of h7 he will attack f7 after ♙c4 and ♘e5.

21...b6 Not only exchanging the advanced c5-pawn, but also obtaining a queenside majority.

22.cxb6 cxb6 23.♘e5 ♜fc8 24.f4!



Caruana carefully avoids the trap.

24.♙c4? looks natural, but Black has the unexpected 24...♖xc4! 25.♘xc4 b5 26.♗e5 b4 and all of a sudden the passed a-pawn cannot be stopped.

24...♖c1 The white rook could have been dangerous on the f-file after f5, so Black exchanges it.

25.♖xc1 ♘xc1 26.♙c4 ♖a7 White has achieved the maximum for now and Black has managed to defend. What now follows is a phase where White tries to manoeuvre with his pieces to try to increase their activity. Black will have to parry those and at the same time he will try to advance his own queenside majority.

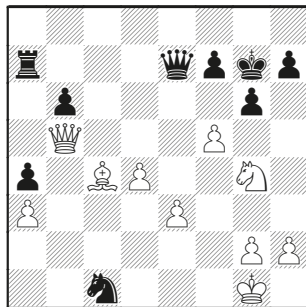
27.♘g4 ♖d6 28.♖g5 A curious move, changing the direction of the attack.

28.f5 was possible, but after 28...♖c7 the bishop is forced to leave the a2-g8 diagonal. This isn't problematic, as after 29.♙f1 ♘b3 30.f6 ♖f8 31.♖f4 the weakness of the black king prevents Black from organising his own queenside play.

28...♖e7 29.♖b5 This was Caruana's idea, to attack Black's queenside pawns.

29...♗g7 Getting away from the vulnerable diagonal and preparing ...f6, to get under control the dark squares f6 and e5.

30.f5



30.♙xf7!? is possible, but it leads only to a draw after 30...♖xf7 (30...♗xf7 31.♖c4+ ♗g7 32.♖xc1 ♖c7 is unclear. Black has lost another pawn but has managed to activate his rook.) 31.♖e5+ ♗f8 32.♖b8+ ♗g7 33.♖e5+ with a perpetual check.

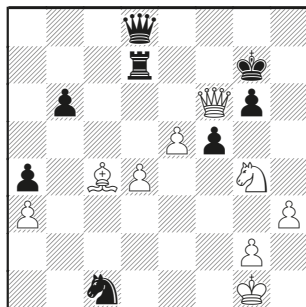
30...f6 31.♖d5 Black has managed to control the dark squares so White continues the attack along the light ones.

31...♖f8 32.fxg6 hxg6 33.e4 The idea is to push e5 and further weaken the black king.

33...♖c8 34.h3 ♖d7 An ugly-looking move that isn't bad, though it disrupts Black's coordination somewhat.

34...♘b3 brings the knight back into play. After 35.e5 f5 36.♘f6 ♘d2 37.♙b5 ♘e4 centralises the knight and ensures that Black has enough pieces to defend the king.

35.♖e6 ♖d8 36.e5 f5 37.♖f6+??



Viswanathan Anand

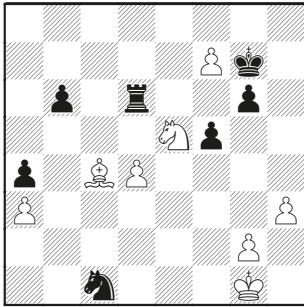


An awful move that Caruana himself couldn't explain. White is now lost after the exchange of queens.

Caruana saw that after 37.♖f6 he would still be pressing, though the engine finds an escape for Black here: 37...♖xd4! 38.♗f7+ ♕h6 39.♖g8+ ♕g5 40.♖e7 ♕f4! and the king finds safety behind the enemy lines!

37...♗xf6 38.exf6+ ♕h7 39.♖e5 ♖d6! Forcing the pawn to move so that the king can return to g7.

40.f7 ♕g7



41.♖f3! A great idea! Seemingly the knight was good on e5, but Caruana understood that it did nothing there, so he reroutes it to g5 from where it can create threats like ♖e6 or ♖h7. From this moment Caruana shows why he is one of the best in the world - in a lost position he finds resources and makes it very difficult even for such a player like Anand.

41...♖b3 42.♖g5 ♖d2 43.♖e6 43.♖h7 unfortunately for White leads to a lost knight endgame after 43...♖d8 44.f8♗+ ♖xf8 45.♖xf8 ♖xc4 46.♖d7 b5 as the pawn on a3 is falling.

43...♖d8 Still winning of course, but this keeps certain tactical elements in the position. This is Anand's first imprecision.

43...♖xe6! was simpler as it simplifies the position and no more tricks are available

to White. 44.♖xe6+ ♕xf7 45.♖c7 ♖b1 46.♖b5 ♕e6 with an easy win as the centralised black king makes all the difference.

44.♕f2 ♕f6 The second imprecision.

44...♖b3! was much better as Black inevitably captures on d4. The line to see was 45.♖xb3 axb3 46.♖e6+ ♕xf7 47.♖xd8+ ♕f6 and the b-pawn promotes.

45.♖d7! The only move, though Black is still winning.

45...♖e4+ 46.♖xe4+ fxe4 The third imprecision. Black continues to be winning, but with every imprecision the task is a bit more difficult for him.

46...♕xf7! Eliminating the f-pawn was much simpler. After 47.♖xa4 fxe4 White will lose either the d4-pawn or the a3-pawn, in both cases with a relatively easy win for Black.

47.♖e8! ♕e7? After three imprecisions Black was already in a situation when he had to make the only move that would win the game and here he fails to do so. But it wasn't easy to determine the difference between the two king moves. Now the game should be a draw.

47...♕g7! was still winning, the idea being that after 48.♕e3 ♖c8 49.♕xe4 ♖c3 50.d5 ♖xa3 51.d6 ♖a1! Black is just in time to control the pawns and advance his own. Obviously this isn't the way to play in a completely winning position as Black had before, leaving it to a super-precise forcing line to seal the win. After missing several relatively easy wins it is unlikely that the player will find the difficult one.

48.♕e3 ♖b8 In case of 48...♖c8 49.♕xe4 ♖c3 50.d5 we see the difference with 47...♕g7. The king on e7 will be checked after d6 so Black has no time to take on a3. We will see a similar idea later in the game.

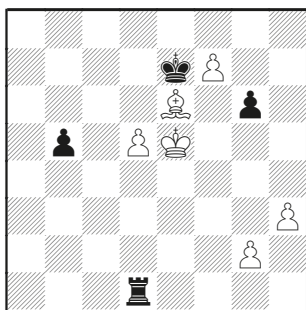
49. ♖xa4 b5 Black decides to go after the pawn on a3 and have a passed b-pawn. This indicated that he was still playing for a win, but by doing so he underestimated White's dangerous passed pawns.

After 49... ♖xf7 50. ♖c6 the pawn on e4 will fall and White will be able to draw in view of the limited material left on the board.

50. ♖b3 ♖a8 **51.** ♖xe4 ♖xa3 **52.** ♖e6 ♖a1? Too slow. Now White's passed pawns are too advanced and Black needs to be careful. He should still be able to draw, though this kind of turnaround from easily winning to playing for a draw is difficult to stomach even for the best players.

52...b4 53.d5 ♖a6 was called for, preventing d6 and threatening to push the b-pawn. The game should be a draw after 54.h4 b3 55.d6+ ♖xd6 56. ♖xb3.

53.d5 ♖d1 54.♖e5



54...♖f1?? Anand fails to find the only way to draw. Not really surprising after all the events in this game.

54...♖e1+ was the only move, and after 55.♖d4 now 55...♖f1 the point being that White cannot play d6 now as in the game. 56.♖c5 g5 57.♖xb5 ♖b1+ 58.♖c5 ♖b8 still preventing d6 59.♖c6 ♖d8 60.♖c7 ♖a8 with a positional draw thanks to the control of the 8th rank. In the game White had the pawn on d7 instead and this made all the difference.

55.d6+! ♖f8 56.♖d5 White will now collect the b5-pawn and create a passed on the kingside that he will push to the 7th rank. Some care is still required, but the position is winning.

56...♖f6 57.d7 ♖e7 58.♖c6 ♖f2 59.♖xb5 ♖b2+ 60.♖c6 ♖b8 61.♖c7 Black resigned here, not wanting to wait to be shown how this is won.

After 61.♖c7 ♖f8 62.h4 ♖h8 (*The pawn endgame after 62...♖xe6 63.d8♖ ♖xd8 64.♖xd8 ♖xf7 65.g4 is winning for White.*) 63.♖d5 getting the bishop away from e6 just in case 63...♖d8 64.♖c6 avoiding a check from d7 64...♖h8 65.g4 ♖f8 66.g5 White wants a passed pawn on the g-file, since the one on the h-file is of the wrong promotion square for the light-squared bishop. 66...♖d8 67.h5 gxh5 68.g6 and the pawns promote, while after 68...♖xd7 69.f8♖+ ♖xf8 70.♖xd7 ♖g7 71.♖e4 h4 72.♖e6 h3 73.♖f5 White is on time to defend the pawn and prevent the h-pawn from promoting.

1-0

Rk	Name	Score	Rating	TPR
1	Caruana, Fabiano	10.0 / 13	2822	2945
2	Carlsen, Magnus	8.0 / 13	2872	2818
3	So, Wesley	7.5 / 13	2765	2796
4	Van Foreest, Jorden	7.0 / 13	2644	2777
5	Dubov, Daniil	7.0 / 13	2683	2774
6	Giri, Anish	6.5 / 13	2768	2739
7	Anand, Viswanathan	6.5 / 13	2758	2739
8	Duda, Jan-Krzysztof	6.5 / 13	2758	2739
9	Firouzja, Alireza	6.5 / 13	2723	2742
10	Xiong, Jeffery	6.0 / 13	2712	2714
11	Artemiev, Vladislav	6.0 / 13	2731	2712
12	Vitiugov, Nikita	5.0 / 13	2747	2653
13	Yu, Yangyi	4.5 / 13	2726	2632
14	Kovalev, Vladislav	4.0 / 13	2660	2606

After this turnaround, Caruana drew with Vitiugov and won all his remaining four games - against Firouzja, Kovalev, Duda and Artemiev.

As a personal observation, I think one more factor contributed to Caruana's amazing victory and that was the fact that he was always playing opponents that Carlsen had played the previous day. Just like Karpov during his historic Linares win in 1994, when he was 'welcoming' the players after they had endured Kasparov the previous day, Caruana took full advantage of the pressure his opponents had to endure by playing first Carlsen and then himself.

If we go back to 2018 we will see Caruana scoring awfully in Wijk with five out of 13 (four losses and one win) before fantastically winning the Candidates a couple of months later. This year he scored one of the best results of his career - how will this (or will it at all) affect his play and result in Yekaterinburg in March?

As usual, Tata Steel didn't disappoint. It is worth noting that the venue was open and free for all visitors, who turned out in large numbers. But this is just the beginning of the year that has the Candidates, the Olympiad and the World Championship match coming!

TATA STEEL CHESS TOURNAMENT 2020

RESULTS OF TATA STEEL MASTERS 2020

SB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
61		½	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	½	1	½	1	1
49.25	½		½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	1	½	1
48.25	½	½		½	½	½	1	½	1	½	½	½	½	½
44.25	½	½	½		1	½	½	½	½	0	0	1	1	½
40.75	0	½	½	0		½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	1
41	½	½	½	½	½		½	½	0	½	½	½	½	1
39.75	0	½	0	½	½	½		½	1	1	½	½	½	½
39.5	0	½	½	½	½	½	½		½	½	½	½	1	½
37.5	0	0	0	½	½	1	0	½		1	1	½	½	1
40.5	½	½	½	1	½	½	0	½	0		1	½	½	0
35.75	0	½	½	1	0	½	½	½	0	0		1	½	1
32.5	½	0	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	0		½	½
28	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	0	½	½	½	½		½
24.5	0	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	0	1	0	½	½	

Openings for Amateurs

by Pete Tamburro, ptamburro@aol.com

"CRAZY CHESS"

The advantage of psychological play

I grew up loving gambits. They were exciting and appealed to my imagination. They were also based on sacrificing material for rapid development. It was a morality play. Good, solid development versus greed.

One of my favourite players early on was Frank Marshall and another Rudolf Spielmann. They both played the Schliemann Defence to the Ruy Lopez. I still play it! I also ran into some people who played this defence, but didn't play by the rules. They played crazy chess. They played an early d6, blocking in the king's bishop - a mortal sin to me. They played highly speculative attacks that were psychologically challenging to their opponents. I couldn't bring myself to play like that. I still can't. But they won... So, I thought I'd share two games that always "annoyed" me. It does reveal one of the advantages of psychological chess, or, as I preferred to call it, "crazy chess." Our main game is a win by Kholmov over, of all people, Nezhmetdinov, who could easily be admitted to their club. Enjoy!

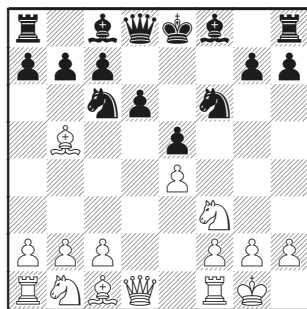
Nezhmetdinov - Kholmov [C63]

Baku, 1961

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 f5 4.d3 Not uncommon today. It's solid, and positional Ruy Lopez players want to keep the game under control. Oh, well, best laid plans...

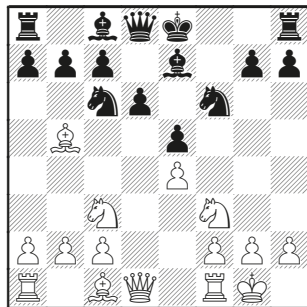
4...fxe4 I've talked about Marshall's ♘f6 here, but most masters prefer the pawn exchange at this point as the ♘f6 line is unnecessarily sharp for their tastes.

5.dxe4 ♘f6 6.0-0 d6



The first time I saw this I was shocked. It was just plain wrong to block in your bishop like that. How could he not know that?

7.♘c3 ♙e7



8.♙c4 In the 1970s FM Milorad Boskovic was a terror in American Swiss tournaments with his aggressive style of play. Here's a game against Leif Karell from the US Open in 1974. I traded a six pack of a specified "beverage" for all the tournament scoresheets turned in. This game isn't in any database. **8.♙d3 ♙g4 9.♙c4 ♙xf3 10.♙xc6+ bxc6 11.♙xc6+ ♘d7 12.gxf3 0-0**

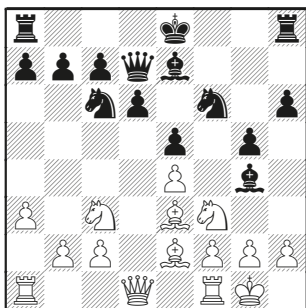
13.♖d5 ♖e8?! 14.♗xc7? (14.f4!) 14...♗g6+
15.♗h1 ♖h5 16.♗xd7 ♖xf3+ 17.♗g1
♗f6 18.♗g5 ♗g6 19.♗xe7 ♗f8 20.♗d5??
(20.♗e6!) 20...♗g4+ 21.♗h1 ♗xg5 22.♗xg5
♗xg5 23.f3 ♗d2 24.♗g1 ♗d4+ 25.♗h1
♗xb2 26.c3 g6 27.♗ab1 ♗xa2 28.♗e3 ♖e2
29.♗be1 ♗d3 30.c4 a5 0-1. White just wasn't
up to the task of calmly meeting Black's moves.

8...♗g4 Black doesn't waste time going
after the light-squared bishop with Na5 so
he can castle kingside. Wait! Castle? He's
not going to even castle?

9.♗e3 ♖d7 Oh, OK, he must be castling
queenside.

10.a3 h6 11.♗e2 It doesn't get any less crazy
after 11.h3 ♗h5 12.g4 ♗xg4 13.hxg4 ♗xg4+
14.♗h2 ♗d4 (14...♗xf3?? 15.♗e2) 15.♗xd4
♗f4+= (15...♗f8 16.♗xe5 dxe5 17.♗d5 ♗xf3
18.♗xc7+ ♗f8 19.♗e6+ ♗e8 20.♗c7+ ♗f8
and we have a perpetual check. Wow...).

11...g5?!

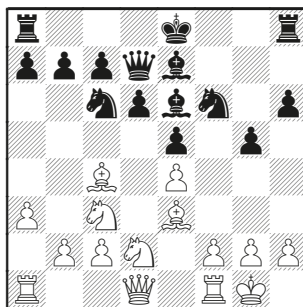


Really? This is nuts. It violates all the rules.
Castling is so much better here. Of course,
what's going on inside Nezh's head right
about now would have been fascinating to
listen in on. The aggressive attacker being
aggressively attacked! 11...0-0-0.

12.♗d2 Trying for exchanges to ease the
pressure, but ♗d3 would have been better as
it would give the queen more breathing room.

12...♗e6! "No, we don't exchange when
you're cramped."

13.♗c4

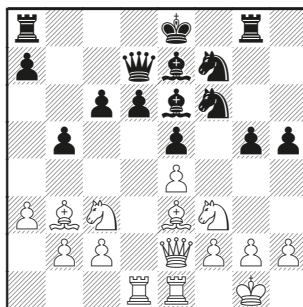


13...♗d8?! Why doesn't he castle??!! He
doesn't want d8 occupied so his knight can
get to f7. Let me get this straight, a gambiteer
wants to take time out to go backwards?
13...0-0-0 is what sane people play.

14.♗e2 14.♗d5 c6 15.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 16.♖e2
d5 17.exd5 cxd5 18.♗b5 Although White is
better in this variation, it may have looked
risky to White as who wants two black pawns
on d5 and e5 with two coordinated bishops
behind them? 18...♗c6 19.♗ad1 a6 20.♗d3
♖f7 21.c4 d4 22.♗e4 0-0 23.♗d2 ♗e7±.

14...c6 15.♗ad1 b5 16.♗b3 ♗f7 At this
point, I understood why he didn't take
the light-squared bishop. It would mean
he would then be able to castle, and we
can't have that happening in this game!
16...♗xb3 17.♗xb3 0-0.

17.♗fe1 h5 18.♗f3 ♗g8



This diagram says it all. Black has set up an ominous-looking position, but White needs to do something active. As often happens, even with somebody like Nezh, defenders have a tendency to defend rather than be active. Exchanging the bishops would have been a nice start, followed by hitting the black queenside.

19.♖d2 ♗xb3 20.cxb3 ♜e6 This might have been a nice alternative: 20...♗g4 21.♙c2 ♗xe3 22.♜xe3 g4.

21.b4 21.♖d3 would also defend the pawn.

21...♗g4!? You can tell that Black now has chances because he even has alternative plans: 21...g4! 22.♗h4 ♗xe4 23.♗xe4 ♗xh4 24.♙c2 d5 25.♗c5 ♜f5 26.♗b3 ♖g6.

22.♙c2 White now gets to provide a space for the better retreating square for the knight. That's why it was a bit better for Black to play g4 instead of ♗g4.

22...♗xe3 23.♜xe3 g4 24.♗d2 Now, White has ♗d2 instead of ♗h4.

24...♗d8 Black has two alternatives, 24...h4; 24...♗g5, but seems to think it's worth wasting a tempo to put the bishop on b6. Strange.

25.♗d1 ♗b6 26.♜e2? 26.♜d3 would give the queen more squares. Is Nezh being affected by this attack?

26...♗d7!? 26...♜d7 27.♗e3 ♗g5±; or Black could protect the pawn with 26...♙c8 as well, but why play that when you can move your king in the middle of your attack?

27.♗e3 An example of drumming up queenside play would be 27.a4. Wake up, Nezh!

27...h4 28.♗df1? Instead of "Super Nezh," we have "Stupified Nezh." How passive! Much better was 28.♙ec1 ♙ac8 29.a4 bxa4 30.b5 g3 31.bxc6+ ♗d8 32.fxg3 hxg3 33.h3 ♗c5 34.♙xc5! dxc5 35.♗d5±.

28...g3!? Sure, keep throwing pawns up the board! It's worked so far. Objectively better

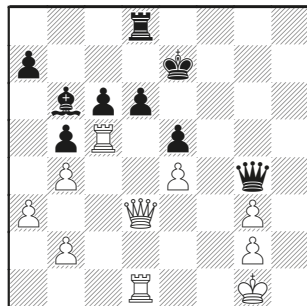
was 28...♗g5 29.♜d3 ♙af8 30.♗f5 ♗xe4 31.♜xe4 d5 32.♜xe5 ♜xf5 33.♜e7+ ♗c8 and White can hold, but the train has left the station of Objectively.

29.fxg3 hxg3 30.♗xg3 ♖xg3!! It's actually a drawing sacrifice.

31.hxg3 ♗h6 32.♜d3 ♗g4 33.♙c5?? 33.♗f1 ♗xe3+ 34.♙xe3 ♗xe3 35.♜xe3= It's equal now, but I played with possibilities, and there were still possible ways for White to go wrong. 35...d5 36.exd5 ♜f5+ 37.♜f2 ♜xf2+ 38.♗xf2 ♙f8+ 39.♗e2 cxd5 40.♙c5 ♗e6 41.♙xb5 ♖g8 42.♙a5 ♖xg3 43.♙a6+ ♗f5 44.♙xa7 e4 45.♗f1 d4 46.♖d7 ♗e5 47.b5 ♙b3 48.a4 ♙xb2 49.a5 ♙xb5 50.a6 ♙b2+.

33...♖h8 33...♗xe3 34.♙xe3 ♖f8 and White's king is in a precarious position.

34.♗xg4 ♜xg4 35.♙f1 ♗e7 36.♖d1 ♖d8+



That pin on c5 is brutal. White resigned as after:

37.♜f3 ♜xf3 38.gxf3 dxc5 39.♙xd8 c4+

0-1

God bless players like Kholmov and Boskovic - and even Nezhmetdinov! These chess pirates often get away with murder. When we lesser mortals try to sail our pirate galleons along the chequered seas, we often end up paddling a canoe down a waterfall.

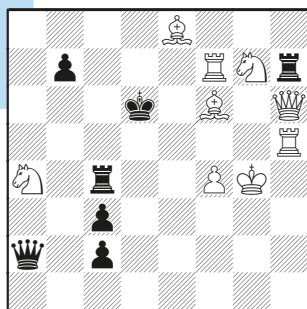
PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

Solutions are given on page 126

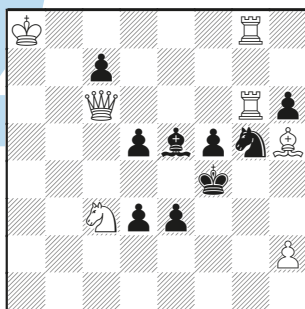


Michael Lipton (Brighton)

Mate in 2

ORIGINAL

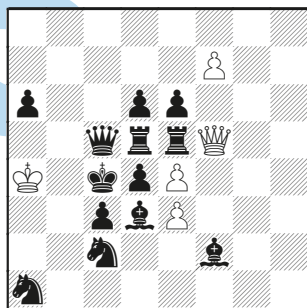
after Jean Morice



Leonid Makaronez (Israel)

Mate in 3

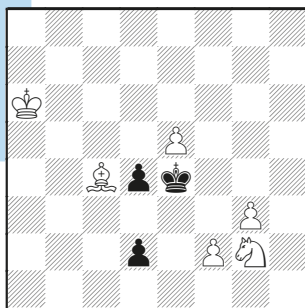
ORIGINAL



Kivanc Cefle (Turkey)

Helpmate in 2 - 2 solutions

ORIGINAL

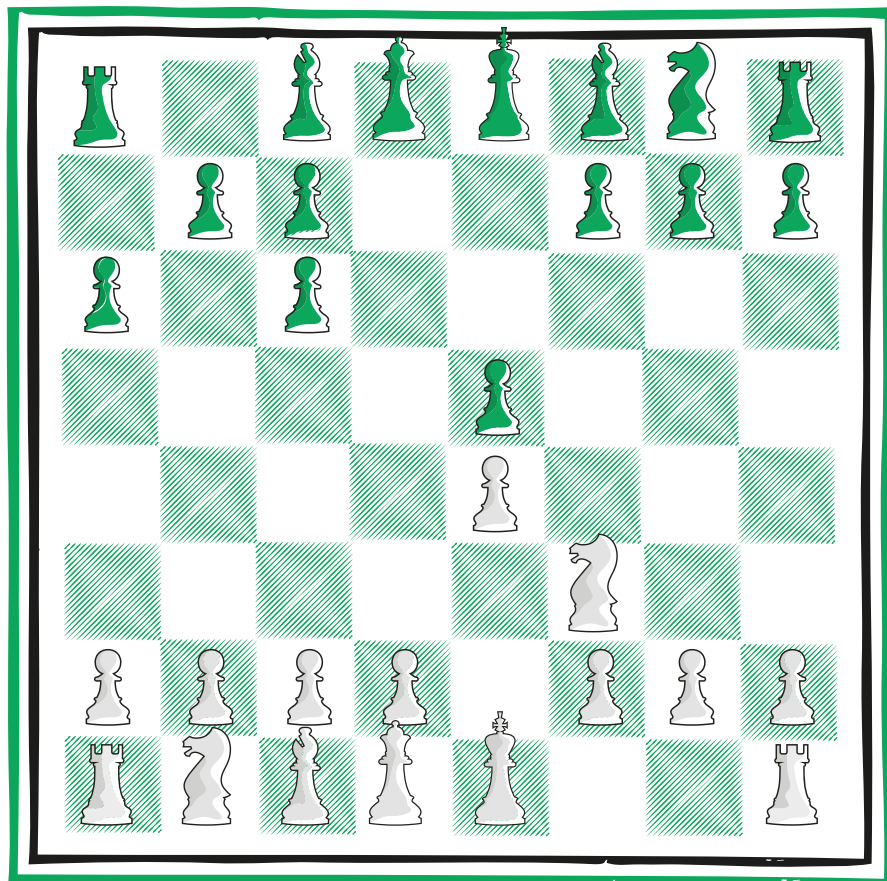


Michael McDowell (Westcliff on Sea)

Helpmate in 2 - 3 solutions

ORIGINAL

QUOTES AND QUERIES



Black's RUY LOPEZ PROBLEM

By Alan Smith

6163 The Exchange Variation of the Ruy Lopez is a pesky line that adherents of 3... a6 need to be ready for. Whether you play the Modern Steinitz, the Moller, the Marshall counter gambit or the Breyer, the problem is the same. The exchange on c6 leaves Black with doubled pawns; most of the endgames will favour White.

Like the Samisch Variation of the Nimzo-Indian, it does not have a great reputation, but it is not silly. Lasker and Fischer both essayed it in crucial games. Here is the stem game:

A. Schroeder – Frederick Deacon

London CC, 1860

1.e4 e5 2.♟f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙xc6 dxc6 5.0-0 ♙d6 6.d3 ♘e7 6...♘f6 7.♘c3 h6 8.h3 0-0 9.♘e2 ♙e6 10.♘g3 Boden - Wayte London 1865.

7.♙g5 This encourages Black to play a good move, 7.♙e3 and 7.♘c3 are both better.

7...f6 8.♙e3 ♙g4 9.h3 ♙xf3 Black is fine after 9...♙h5.

10.♖xf3 0-0 11.♘d2 ♖e8 12.c4 c5 13.♖e2 f5 14.f4 exf4 15.♙xf4 ♘g6 16.♙xd6 cxd6 17.♖h5 ♖e5 18.♘f3 ♘f4 Black avoids 18...♖xb2 19.♘g5.

19.♘xe5 ♘xh5 20.♘d7 ♖f7 21.♖xf5 ♖xf5 22.exf5 ♘g3 23.f6 ♖d8 24.♙h2 ♘h5 Black should settle for 24...♖xd7 25.♙xg3 gxf6.

25.f7+ ♙xf7 26.♖f1+ ♙g6?? Working on general principles he activates his king, not anticipating White's response. 26...♙g8 was correct, 27.♘b6 ♘f6 28.♖f5 is level.

27.♘f8+ ♙h6 28.g4 ♘f6 29.g5+! Taking advantage of Black's slip.

29...♙h5 30.♘e6 ♖d7 31.gxf6 gxf6 32.♖xf6 ♖e7 33.♙g3 b5 34.h4

1-0

Field, 26th May 1860

6169 The other side of the coin is a rare defence to the Exchange Variation. Here is a game from the Chester League which features an enterprising novelty.

The exchange on c6 leaves Black with doubled pawns; most of the endgames will favour White

Thomas Bimpson - John Toothill

Northwich- Bowaters, 1965

1.e4 e5 2.♟f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙xc6 dxc6 5.0-0 ♙g4 6.h3 ♙h5!? A sharp alternative to the usual 6...h5. Black offers a pawn, but to accept the gift White must expose his king to attack. The sacrifice dates back to Dyckhoff-Shories Barmen 1905.

7.g4 ♙g6 8.♘xe5 ♙d6 A novelty, instead of 8...♖h4 which was Shories' choice.

9.♘c4 9.♘xg6 hxg6 10.♖f3 ♖h4 11.♙g2 ♘f6 12.e5 ♘d5 did not work out any better for White in the game S.Bogner- M.Carlsen Gausdal 2005, 0-1 31.

9...h5! 10.d4 hxg4 11.e5 ♖xh3! 12.♖xg4 White does not have time for 12.exd6? as 12...♖h4! wins.

12...♖h4 13.♖g3 ♙e7! White is already in big trouble: Black has the bishop pair and the safer king.

14.♘bd2 ♘h6 15.♘e3 ♘f5 16.♖g2 16.♘xf5 ♙xf5 threatening ...♖xg4.

16...♘d4 17.f4 ♙c5 18.♘f3 ♙e4 19.♘xh4 ♙xg2 20.♘hxg2 ♘xc2 21.♖b1 ♖d3

0-1

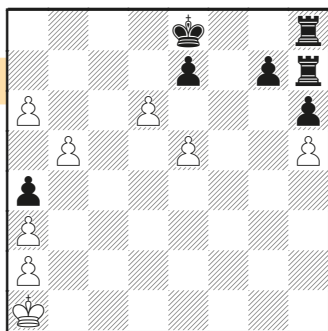
Cheshire Observer, 26th November 1965

6170 The Exchange Variation lost favour with master players after Lasker stopped playing it. His last tournament game with the line was against Marshall at New York 1924. The exchange went through forty years in the doldrums, but that all changed in November 1966 when Fischer played 4.♙xc6 three times in the finals of the Havana Olympiad, defeating Portisch, Gligoric and Jimenez.

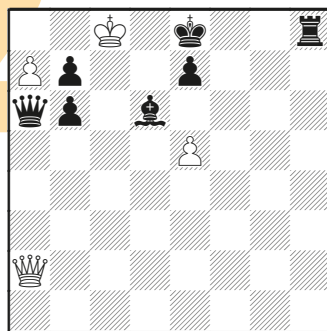
Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson

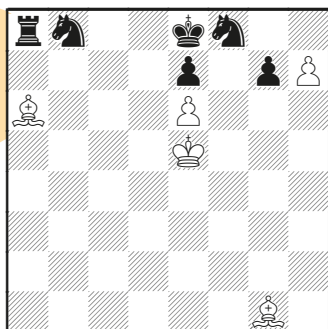
ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk



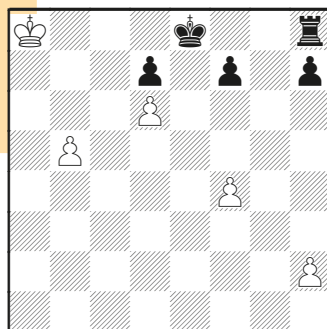
V Korolkov
Leningrad SF 1955
DRAW



V Korolkov
Yerevan Ty 1947
DRAW



N Kralin
Korolkov JT 1977
WIN



E Kolesnikov
Moscow Champ. 1992
(a) White to play and win
(b) Position after White's first move in first part: Black to play and win

No-Castling Chess?

Vladimir Kramnik's idea is to remove castling. He's recently proposed changing chess so that every rule remains the same except that castling isn't allowed. It might reduce the number of draws, by making the game more tactical because it would be harder to tuck the king away from the action. It's also been suggested it would reduce the amount of theory players have to learn, but I don't think that would last long - players would simply leave their computers running, as they do now, and soon build up a large body of new theory.

What would it do to endgame studies and to problems? Probably nothing; our problem and study community doesn't change its rules every time FIDE does. Fortunately. If we did, each time the rules changed a whole swathe of well-known problems and studies would become incorrect. Admittedly, FIDE hasn't tinkered with the castling rules much but they have changed, for example, the 50-move rule a lot of times, and there are composed positions that use that rule. In the problem/study world, we have consistently kept to the strict and simple 50-move rule.

For now, anyway, the castling rule remains in force in normal chess, but the problem/study world has to have an additional castling rule, because our compositions don't begin from the initial array. So we have a rule that says that castling in a problem or a study is legal unless it can be proven from the position that it must be illegal. Proving that is often possible - if the position was Black king e8 and Black rook a8, and White king on g2, say, and it was White to move, you'd know that either Black's rook or king had moved, else what was Black's last move?

I like the castling rules, because they enable some quirky and fun compositions. It sometimes goes to extremes, however: I remember a problem in which you were told that Black had given odds of his queen's rook. In the problem, Black was threatening to escape with his king by 'castling' long - which meant playing ♖e8-c8, there being no queen's rook to move. The solution involved White playing his bishop to a8, which illegalised odds castling by 'capturing' the (non-existent) rook. Our four studies this month aren't (quite) as weird as that... The first three are, in effect, double puzzles because you have to work out whether castling is legal, and when you've done that you have to solve the study. The fourth one is a double - it has two parts. After you've checked the legality of castling and solved the first part, then do it again but this time from the position after White's first move. So, in part two, it's Black to move first and the b-pawn is on b6.

The solutions are on page 127.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

This month's problems...

...the second instalment in our 2020-2021 composing tourney begins with another of Michael Lipton's 'afters': he has studied, honed and then 're-invented' a 1969 problem by the distinguished French composer Jean Morice to arrive at a position which does indeed seem to show more play in its variations (and has one less unit in the diagram). I shan't take space with any further 'contrast and compare' comments, but our tourney judge Hans Gruber will weigh this up! Less introduction is called for by the other problems. In the helpmates we are looking for collaborative BWBW# sequences of moves. As you might expect, in Michael's helpmate you are looking for ways to promote the d2 pawn, but it may save you solving time if I say that in the other helpmate the f7 pawn is only a 'technical piece', which, staying where it is, ensures the problem's soundness.

Try, try, try and try again

There are four 'tries' (attempted key moves that fail to just one black response), all plausible, and all sharing an important strategic feature. 1. ♖xb7? crosses e7 in order to threaten 2. ♕e7, but Black can intervene on the b7-e7 line by means of the refutation 1... ♖c7!. 1. ♖b5?, crossing e5, threatens 2. ♕e5 but, similarly, fails against 1... ♖c5!. (Note that the reason that these defences are effectual is not the crude one that they guard the mating square. This doesn't matter, as 2. ♕e7 and 2. ♕e5 would still be *double-check* mates. Rather, the defences prepare the escapes respectively 2... ♖xe7 and 2... ♖d5.) 1. ♕b5?, crossing d7, threatens 2. ♖d7, but is refuted by 1... ♖c6!. And 1. ♖e5? crosses f5 in order to threaten 2. ♖f5; this time the refutation does not come in the form of a black move to the h5-e5 line but is instead 1... ♖xf4+!. The c4 rook is a key defender! In the diagram 1... ♖xf4+ loses to 2. ♖xf4, but with a white rook blocking the f4-d6 line it's a different story. The key is 1. ♖b6!, threatening 2. ♖d5. Now we have a striking strategic effect, known by problem buffs as a Dombrovskis (after the distinguished Latvian composer who pioneered the effect). After 1. ♖b6, the defence 1... ♖c7 is thwarted by 2. ♕e7, the very move which previously it refuted; and the same Dombrovskis paradoxicality is revealed in 1... ♖c5 2. ♕e5 and 1... ♖c6 2. ♖d7. It's worth checking out why these lines of play work. (There are a

few other ineffectual defences that you may like to eliminate.)

A 3-mover with some hard-to-see play?

Leonid's 3-mover is not very complex, but I think that some of the play is hard to see (I wonder whether you have the same experience). The key, 1. ♖e8!, threatens 2. ♖xd5+ ♖e4 3. ♖xc4. The move 1... d4 defends this, but unexpectedly 1... ♖f6! now works. This of course threatens 3. ♖xe5 and any move by the e5 bishop (including 2... ♖xf6) opens the line e8-e4 and so allows 3. ♖d5. (If the black pawn were still at d5, then 2... ♖xc3 would defend.) If 1... ♖f3, 2. ♖xd5! creates zugzwang; 2... ♖ any 3. ♖xe5. And we also have 1... ♖e6 2. ♖xe6 ♖xc3 3. ♖xe3 and 1... ♖xc3 2. ♖xc7+ ♖e5 3. ♖xe5.

Clearing the decks

We welcome Kivanc to this column. In his helpmate attempts to play 2... ♖f1# need to deal with the d3 bishop and also with the defence 3.d3 that becomes available when the d3 bishop moves. Similarly in order to achieve 2... ♖c8# we need to think about the ♖c5 and then the ♖d5. There is a pleasing analogy between the ways in which these goals are achieved: 1. ♖f1 exd4 2. ♖xd4 ♖xf1 and 1. ♖c8 exd5 2. exd5 ♖xc8.

(See page 121)

Minor promotions

An experienced solver will immediately expect that in Michael's helpmate the d2 pawn will make each of the 3 possible minor promotions. (In a sound 2-mover it cannot be otherwise, for what could a black queen do in one move that could not also be done by a black bishop or a black rook?) In typical fashion, Michael

has refined this problem until, with just 9 units on the board, we have a crystal-clear and delightful trio of solutions: 1.d1=♖ ♖h4 2.♖e3 f3; 1.d1=♗ ♗f4 2.♗f3 ♗d3; and 1.d1=♝ ♝e3 2.♝d3 ♝d5. As Michael says, "there is a curious Black-White cyclic occupation of e3, f3 and d3!".

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

(See page 124)

Korolkov - 1955

1.e6 exd6 2.a7 ♖e7 3.b6 ♜a8 4.b7 ♜hh8 5.b8♗ ♜~xb8 6.axb8♗ ♜xb8 stalemate.

2.b6? g6 3.b7 ♜xb7 4.axb7 ♖e7 5.hxg6 h5 6.g7 ♜g8. The Black rook on h7 could only have got there via h8, so the other rook must also have moved, so castling is illegal. This is called a 'cantcastler'.

Korolkov -1947

1.a8♗ ♗xa8+ 2.♗xa8 ♖f7+ 3.♖d7 ♜xa8 4.e6+ ♖g6 stalemate.

Black can't castle because his king must have moved, to let the White king get to the eighth rank. It couldn't have got there via a7 or c7, because the b6 pawn must have come from c7 or a7 and either way was guarding the b6 square. Another cantcastler.

Kralin

1.♗b5+ ♗bd7+ 2.♗xd7+ ♗xd7+ 3.♖f4 ♜a4+ 4.♖g3 ♜g4+ 5.♖h3 ♗f8 6.h8♗ ♜xg1 7.♗h5+ wins.

Black can't castle because he has no last move except for with his rook or king (all the knight moves would have been from squares where they were giving check).

Kolesnikov

(a) 1. b6 f5 2.b7 ♖f7+ 3.b8♗ ♜xb8+ 4.♖xb8 ♖f6 5.♖c8 ♖e6 6.♖c7 h6 7.h3 h5 8.h4 wins. 1...f6 2.f5 ♖f7+ 3.♖a7 ♖g7 4.b7 ♖h6 5.b8♗. Castling by Black is obviously not legal.

(b) 1...00+ 2.♖a7 ♖g7 3.b7 ♖f6 4.b8♗ ♜xb8 5.♖xb8 ♖e6 6.♖c7 f5 7.h3 h6 8.h4 h5 and Black wins. Yes, but Black can't castle? Well, we saw the White pawn move from b5 to b6 in (a), but the second part is a new study, so the events of the first part aren't relevant, we are only allowed to use the part (b) start position; in that position, White has just moved, and could, for example, have played pawn on c5 takes a Black bishop on b6. In that case, Black has a last move other than with his king or rook, so we can't prove that castling is illegal, and it is therefore allowed. This was probably composed just to show the bizarre effects of the castling rules in studies.

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